A HEAVEN or HELL UPON EARTH: OR, A DISCOURSE CONCERNING Conſcience.

By *Nathanael Vincent*, M. A. Miniſter of the GOSPEL.

Acts 24. 16. *Herein do I Exerciſe my ſelf, to have a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man.* ℣ 2. 27. *Th.*

Multi quærunt Scientiam, pauci Conſcientiam; ſi vero tanto ſtudio & ſollicitudine quæreretur Conſcientia; quanto quæritur ſecularis & vana ſcientia, citiùs apprehenderetur, & utiliùs retineretur. Bernard. *de Interior. dom.* cap. 21.

Τίς δύναται νουθετῆσαι ἄλλος ἄλλον ὡς αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν; τὸ γὰρ αὐτεξούσιον τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ τῆς φύσεως ἀποχρώμενον ἀπεσείεται τὰς παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων συμβουλὰς ὅταν μὴ ἐθέλῃ πείθεσθαι ὁ δὲ οἴκοθεν λογισμὸς αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ κατακούειν ἀνάγκην ἔχει τοῦτον ἐπίτροπον ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς ἐπέστησε τοῦτον παιδαγωγὸν καὶ διδάσκαλον. Hierocl. *in* Pythag. *aur. Carm.* pag. *mihi* 213. 214.

London, Printed for *Thomas Parkhurſt*, at the *Three Bibles and Crown* at the Lower end of *Cheap-ſide*. 1676.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

HEAVEN or HELL
UPON
EARTH:
OR A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
Conscience.

TO THE

Much Honoured,

Sir *Nathanael Herne*,
Henry Ashurst, Sen. Esq;
Mr. *Abr. D'elins*, Merchant.
John Gould, Esq;
Mr. *Kiffin*, Merchant.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be Multiplyed.

Honoured Sirs,

IF a Wish might be Granted, to hear the Apostle *Paul* in the Pulpit, one would be ready to Wish again, that *Christ* or *Conscience* might be the Subject of his Sermon. Were *He* to Preach, how would he set forth Christ, who is the *Beloved Son of God!* the *brightness of his Fathers Glory!* who is *Adored by all the Angels!* and deserves to be *the Desire of all Nations!* How plainly and impartially would he deal with Conscience, examining, searching, and reproving it, and thereby *commend himself to it in the sight of*

God. One (*a*) of the Fathers calls Conscience a Book, and Affirms, that other Books were invented, that the *Errata* in this might be Corrected. The Scriptures themselves were given by Inspiration of God, to this End, that the Evils of Conscience might be Discovered, and *the Man of God made Perfect, throughly furnished unto all good Works.*

'Tis therefore a bad World, because Conscience seems to be Exiled and Banished out of it. Conscience has in these Days lost its Power, and does not Exercise that Authority which by right it should, as Gods Vicegerent here below: But Mens Wills and Lusts have got the head; so that neither God is feared, nor Man regarded: And for their own Souls, they are least of all concerned. If it be a sad Sight to see Beggars on Horse-back, and *Princes Walking as Servants upon the Earth*, much more is it to be Lamented, that Mens Corruptions, which ought to be held in perpetual Restraint, should sway and Command all;

(a) *Unicuique Liber est sua Conscientia; & ad hunc Librum discutiendum & emendandum, omnes alii inventi sunt.* Bernard. *De Interior. Dom.* Cap. 28.

and

and Conscience the mean while be slighted, stifled, stupified, and kept under; which, as a Prince should be Obeyed in every thing, and from God give Laws to the whole Man.

What One said of a good Magistrate, may be applyed unto a good Conscience, that (*b*) *'Tis a Benefactor and Friend to Mankind.* 'Twill never be well with us till *this* have a Resurrection. This is the way to obtain a Blessing from God, the way to have Prosperity, Trade, Reputation; (and which is more than any, than all these) the Honour and Credit of the Christian Religion revived; which has sunk in the esteem of many, because so little of Conscience has appeared in those who have Professed it.

That thus it may be, is the end, both of this Book, and of its Author.

And I have Dedicated it unto you (Honoured Sirs) who are of different Perswasions, to shew that great Respect I unfeignedly bear unto you All; and because Persons of all Perswasions have need to study the Subject here Treated of. How many bad Consciences are there of every Opinion! And if all of every Opinion would but look

(b) Εὐεργέτης βροτοῖσι καὶ μέγας φίλος.

well to their Conſciences, and be ſo ſelf-denying, as to lay aſide their Paſſions and their Intereſts: This would be one of the moſt probable means to bring all to a better Agreement. They are the Carnal and Hypocritical of every Party, who endeavour to make breaches wider, that are the Quarrellers and Diſputers. The truly Conſcientious abhor Contention; the ſincere are very inclinable unto Peace.

I ſhall add no more, but Conclude this my Addreſs to you with an earneſt Wiſh, that All of every Perſwaſion may imitate You All in regard of Conſcientiouſneſs, Moderation, and Wiſdom. And 'tis not a Complement to tell you, that in thus Wiſhing, I Wiſh well to the whole Nation, and to the Churches of Chriſt in it.

Your moſt Humble Servant for Jeſus ſake,

Nathanael Vincent.

AN

An ADDRESSE TO THE *Conſcience* of the READER.

Conſcience,

MY *Expectation is greater from Thee, than from any thing in the Reader beſides. I make no queſtion, but what I have written being oppoſite unto the ſinfull and corrupt Inclinations of men, will alſo be diſpleaſing to their Humour; but I have hope that Thou wilt ſide with me. 'Tis eaſie to convince Thee, that Sin is to the prejudice of the whole Man; that a Redeemer is to be prized by Sinners who are under the worſt kind of Bondage; and that Holineſs is for men's Honour, and Intereſt, and Safety. 'Tis eaſie to convince Thee, that thoſe Pleaſures and Advantages which are offer'd in Temptation, are inconſiderable, and that 'tis the heighth of Folly to yield unto the Tempter, to forſake an All-*

ſufficient God, to hazard an immortal Soul, and venture the enduring of Eternal Miſery, for the ſake of thoſe Profits and Delights which are ſo mixed and unſatisfactory while enjoyed; and which can continue at longeſt but a very ſhort ſeaſon.

And ſince it is moſt certainly thus, O Conſcience, *keep not ſilence, produce the Word of God, and there ſhew how the Lord has given thee a Negative Voice, and allows nothing to be done that may defile or wound thee. Proteſt loudly and peremptorily againſt all Sin, call Heaven and Earth to witneſs, and God himſelf unto thine aſſiſtance; Vigorouſly oppoſe the Enemy of Mankind, who hath his Name* Apollyon, *becauſe he endeavours to deſtroy all. Beſtirre thy ſelf, and joyn with Me in endeavouring to hinder the everlaſting Ruine of every Reader who ſhall take this Book into his hand.*

My deſign is not to turn People to a Party, but to turn them unto God; that which I preach up is Faith in our Lord Jeſus, and Purity in Heart and Converſation: And ſurely ſuch a deſign Thou canſt not but approve; ſuch a Doctrine Thou muſt needs grant is faithful, ſound, and conſequently worthy of all Acceptation.

O Conſcience, *I am pleading for God! that He who is ſo Great and Good may be obeyed,*

ed, and that the Sons of Men would ſubmit their Wills to His: And this is a thing but very equal, ſince their Wills are corrupt and fooliſh, and ſtrongly inclin'd unto what is miſchievous to themſelves; but His is wiſe and gracious, and never commands any thing but what is really for the Profit of him that is to yield Obedience.

I am likewiſe, O Conſcience, *pleading for Thee, that Thou mayſt be allowed the free Exerciſe of thy Authority and Power; and mayeſt be hearkened to whenever thou doſt declaim againſt Sin, and urge unto thoſe Duties which the Lord requires. The deſign of this Book is, that Thou mayſt be more fully enlightned; that thou mayſt be more pure and peaceable; that thoſe wounds which Sin has made in thee may be healed; and that wounds which are ſo intolerable may for the future be prevented; and above all that thou mayſt not be forced to torture Thy ſelf and any Reader for ever in another World.*

O Conſcience, *next unto the Spirits gracious and powerfull Concurrence, (which with my whole Soul I do implore) the Succeſs of this Treatiſe will very much depend upon Thy Faithfulneſs in doing of thy Office. Bid the Reader mind what he reads, apply to himſelf what he minds, practice what he applyes; and having begun to practiſe, never grow weary of well-*

doing,

doing. Tell him, 'tis not enough to profeſs Religion, nor to (c) *talk at a great rate, nor to be highly eſteemed among men* (d) *for Godlineſs, as long as God and Thou do know that his Heart is not upright and ſincere.*

Now that the Readers Conſcience may be better, his Heart better, his Converſation better, and more to the Honour of God, and Credit of Chriſtianity, and that it may be beſt of all with him at Death and Judgement; is, and ſhall be the Prayer of

Nathanael Vincent.

(c) *Nos qui non habitu ſapientiam ſed mente præferimus, non magna eloquimur ſed vivimus.* Minut. Fœl. pag. *mihi* 94.

(d) *Quid mihi prodeſt ſi me continuis laudibus totus mundus attollat? Non malam Conſcientiam ſanat præconium laudantis; nec bonam vulnerat conviciantis opprobrium.* Auguſtin. To. 7. l. 3. *contra Lit.* Petilian. Donatiſt. pag. *mihi* 168.

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There is in Man a Conſcience.

ACTS 23. 1.

And Paul *earneſtly beholding the Council ſaid, Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conſcience before God untill this Day.*

IN the foregoing Chapter the Apoſtle *Paul* declares at large unto the Jews, the miraculous manner of his converſion to the Chriſtian Faith: and being thus converted, he was very forward to propagate that Faith which once he endeavoured to deſtroy. He tells them plainly, that in oppoſing Jeſus of *Nazareth*, he had been θεομάχος, *a fighter againſt God himſelf*; and that the Stone which heretofore he had ſtumbled at, is that chief Corner-ſtone which is laid in *Zion* for a Foundation; on which whoever builds, his building ſhall never fall. This he perceived evidently in his way to *Damaſcus*, as he was journeying with Authority and Commiſſion to perſecute the Chriſtians; Chriſt himſelf both meets and ſtops him. at *Mid-day he ſaw a Light from Heaven above the*

Brightneſs of the Sun; which did both ſtrike him Blind with its exceſſive Shining, and yet alſo opened his Eyes, to behold his former Error, in ſetting himſelf againſt the Lord of Life and Glory.

The deſign of this Relation was to convince the Jewes, and to perſwade them to embrace that Jeſus who was crucified indeed, that he might redeem them from the curſe, which they could never eſcape by any other means; but liveth by the power of God, and is exalted far above all Heavens that he might fill all things.

Well; They hear the Apoſtle with patience, untill he told them of his Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel to the Gentiles; and then a moſt Satanical Envy and Fury ſtops their Ears, and they cry out; *Away with ſuch a Fellow from the Earth.* And truly from the Earth they had quickly ſent him, if the chief Captain *Lyſias*, underſtanding that he was a Roman (that is; though a Jew by birth, yet having the priviledge of a Roman Citizen) (*a*) had not reſcued him out of their hands.

Being thus delivered from the multitude, he is brought and ſet before the Councel. He ſtands alone indeed to make his defence; but as the Lord ſtood by him to ſtrengthen him, ſo he brings with him a good Conſcience, which was as much, nay, more to make him undaunted, then if he had had a thouſand witneſſes of his innocency. *And* Paul *earneſtly beholding the Councel, ſaid, Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conſcience before God unto this day.*

(a) *Nirunt hiſtoriæ Romanæ periti, quoſdam in provinciæ civitate fuiſſe donatos, ſi de Republicâ bene meriti hanc ſibi mercedem à Proconſulibus rogarent; ita nihil abſurdi eſt natum fuiſſe Romanum civem, qui tamen ex provinciâ remotâ oriundus nunquam in Italiâ pedem poſuiſſet.* Calv. *in Act. Apoſt.*

The

The words contain the Apostles profession, in which several particulars are very remarkable.

1. He professes that he *had lived in good Conscience*; he speaks of *Conscience* to his Adversaries, that he might awaken Their's to do their Duty, that hereby they might be hindered from doing wrong to him, but more wrong to themselves by unrighteous judgment. He farther adds, that his *Conscience was good*; and did not at all accuse, but cleer him.

2. *He had acted as before God*; and had good Assurance that God approved of what he had done: he had cause to be confident, that the Supream and Most Righteous Judge would not condemn him; but was pleased at that, for which the Jews were so much offended. *Chrisost.* observes (*b*) that the Apostle speaks thus to take away the Jewes prejudice against him, and to convince them that he had done nothing which was injurious to them, or worthy of the bonds which were upon him.

3. He had approved himself unto God and Conscience *in all things*, he was not ruled by carnal interest, or fleshly Wisdom, but there was simplicity and godly sincerity, in the whole course of his conversation, since his first conversion to the Christian Faith.

4. Neither was this only for a while, but even *unto that very day* wherein there were such loud exclamations against him, as if he were unfit to live any longer in the World.

5. You are to take notice of the persons before whom he professes all this; and those were *the Council* of the Jews. And;

(b) Ο'υ σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ ἠδικκῶς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲ ἄξιον τῶν δεσμῶν τούτων πράττων. Chrysost. in Act. Apost. λογ μη.

1. He ſtedfaſtly and *earneſtly lookes upon them*, to ſhew both his Courage and his Innocency: he is not afraid to face them, neither does he caſt down his eyes through guilt or ſhame.

2. He calls them not only *Men*, *but Brethren*. His Brethren they were according to the Fleſh, and though full of hatred againſt him, yet he had a Brotherly love to them, and his Hearts deſire was that they might be ſaved.

I ſhall obſerve from the Text, ſeveral points of Doctrine.

1. *God has placed a Conſcience in Man.* The Apoſtle had a Conſcience and 'twas a good Conſcience, all others have a Conſcience likewiſe either good or evil.

2. *To have a good conſcience ſhould be every ones greateſt care.* Every one ſhould ſtrive to reſemble the Apoſtle, and be able to ſay, I have lived in good Conſcience.

3. *A good Conſcience will make men to ſet themſelves as before God continually.* I have lived in good Conſcience before God.

4. *A good Conſcience has a great and laſting influence upon the Life and all the Actions.* I have *lived* in *all* good Conſcience, and that *unto this day*.

5. *A good Conſcience makes a Man fearleſs, and and ſteels his Heart with courage, when he ſtands before his Enemies.* *Paul* earneſtly beheld the Council.

6. *Thoſe who are truly Conſcientious, love their adverſaries, and wiſh them no worſe then if they were their brethren.* *Paul* ſaid, Men and Brethren:

Doct. 1. *God has placed a Conſcience in Man.* Such a thing as Conſcience is ſuppoſed in the Text, elſe 'twere not capable of being good or bad. To have a Conſci-

Conſcience is common to all; though to have a good one, as the Apoſtle had, is very rare.

In the handling of this Doctrine, I ſhall undertake three things. Firſt I ſhall prove that there is a Conſcience in Man. Secondly, I ſhall tell you what this Conſcience is. Thirdly, I ſhall aſſign the Reaſons why the Lord hath given unto Man a Conſcience. After theſe three things are diſpatched, will follow the Application.

1. In the firſt place I am to prove, *That there is a Conſcience in Man* There is great need that this ſhould be made evident, becauſe (c) many regard Conſcience no more, then if it were a μορμολύκειον a meer Bug-bear, to fright thoſe who are timorous; then if it were a dream or phancy. But as the reaſon why the fool ſayes in *his Heart there is no God*, *Pſ.* 14. 1. tis not becauſe there is no God indeed: but becauſe being afraid of God, he wiſhes there were none at all. So the true cauſe why ſtupid ſinners ſay there is no ſuch thing as Conſcience, is this, Conſcience does accuſe, and reproach, and diſquiet them, and they firſt wiſhing there were no ſuch thing, employ their corrupt reaſon to argue againſt it. But I ſhall prove that there is really a Conſcience in Man three wayes. Firſt, By the Light of Nature. Secondly, By Scripture. And laſtly, By Experience.

1. That there is ſuch a thing as Conſcience is evident. *By the Light of Nature.* Though there is a further light which ſhines from the Word of God, yet the light of Nature is much to be regarded: for thoſe

(c) *Ita in multorum animis extincta eſt conſcientia, ut licet interdum tacitos ejuſdem ſtimulos ſentiant; tamen quæ de eâ audiant pro ludibrio habeant; ac ſi figmentum, ſomnium & inane μορμολύκειον, eſſet Conſcientia.* Baldwinus, De Conſcientiâ, lib. 1. cap. 1.

Truths are of very great importance and uſe, that by this light are made manifeſt. (*d*) The light of Nature informs us of an *eternal Power and God-Head, Rom.* 1. 20. The ſame light alſo tells us of a Conſcience, which is ever with us, always obſerves us, and unto whoſe Power and Authority we ought to ſubmit our ſelves. The Apoſtle ſpeaks fully to this purpoſe, *Rom.* 2. 14. 15. *The Gentiles which have not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves, which ſhew the work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conſcience alſo bearing them Witneſſe, and their Thoughts the mean while accuſing or elſe excuſing one another.*

1. *There is a Law written in the Hearts of the Gentiles.* They were not altogether unacquainted with the duties of the firſt Table; but knew that as there is a God, ſo this God is to be loved, pleaſed, praiſed, ſerved; and that there ſhould be a truſting in him; that he ſhould be Worſhipped with a pure mind. 'Twas the ſaying of *Cato.* (*e*) *If God be a Spirit then with a pure mind chiefly he is to be Worſhipped.* But as to the ſecond Table of the Law, they were more fully inſtructed concerning the duties therein required. They knew that Parents were to be honoured, that Murther was to be abhorred, that Adultery was not to be committed, that Theft was a ſin to be avoided, that they were not to bear falſe Witneſs againſt others, nor to Covet what belonged to them. Now by this Law in their Hearts, the Conſciences of the Heathens were informed, and obliged; and here-

(*d*) *Præmiſit Deus Naturam Magiſtrum, ſubmiſſurus prophetiam, ut facilius credas prophetiæ, diſcipulus naturæ.* Tertul.

(*e*) *Si Deus eſt animus, nobis ut carmina dicunt,*
Hic tibi præcipuè ſit purâ mente colendus.
Cato De moribus, lib. 1. diſt. 1.

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by they were able to diſcern the difference between Good and Evil. *Seneca* ſayes, that (*f*) *there is a ſenſe of good even in thoſe minds that are carried away unto the Commiſſion of the greateſt Evils, neither are they ignorant what is abominable, but neglect what they underſtand.*

2. *The Conſciences of the Heathens did bear them witneſſe*, in this reſpect the *Lord may be ſaid not to have left himſelf without a witneſs*, even in them to whom his written Word never came. The Gentiles took notice of ſomething within themſelves, which as it did urge them to what was good, and endeavoured to reſtrain them from evil, ſo it took notice of all they did, and was ready to witneſs for them or againſt them, according as the Law written in their Hearts was obſerved or tranſgreſſed. 'Tis a notable injunction of *Pythagoras*; (*g*) *Above all others reverence thy ſelf*, that is; chiefly regard Conſcience the witneſs within thee, and be afraid and aſhamed to do any thing before this witneſſe, which may be matter of juſt accuſation againſt thee.

3. *The Thoughts of the Gentiles did accuſe them upon their doing Evil.* Theſe accuſations were accompanied with great Torment; and this torment was the more tormenting becauſe Conſcience could not be avoided, but guilty ſinners were forced to hear the diſquieting reproaches of it. The Fable concerning *Tityus*, who after he attempted to Raviſh *Latona*, was adjudged to have a Vulture to feed upon his Liver, which grew with the Moon, and conſequently was

(*f*) *Scias ſubeſſe animis etiam ad peſſima abductis, boni ſenſum, nec ignorari turpe, ſed negligi.* Sen. Epiſt. 97.

(*g*) Πάντων δὲ μάλιστ' αἰσχύνεο σαυτὸν, Pythag. Aur. Cor.

ſtill the Vultures food; (*) did ſignifie the gripings of a guilty Conſcience for ſin, which are inceſſant. The Furies which the Poets talk of, are the torments of an accuſing Conſcience; and ſuch kind of puniſhments are a great deal worſe than the ſevereſt judge on Earth is able to inflict. *Juvenal, Satyr.* 13. ſpeaks notably to this purpoſe.

——— *Cur tamen hos tu*
Evaſiſſe putes, quos diri conſcia facti
Mens habet attonitos, et ſurdo verbere cædit
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum?
Pœna autem vehemens et multo ſuævor illis
Quas et Cæditius gravis invenit, aut Rhadamanthus
Nocte dieque ſuum geſtare in pectore teſtem.

Which verſes may be thus tranſlated into Engliſh.

But think'ſt thou, he eſcapes, whoſe conſcience makes
Whips that, unheard, his guilty Soul ſtill ſhakes?
The Judge Cæditius *cannot* here invent,
Nor Rhadamant *in* Hell, *a puniſhment*
To equal his, that's day and night oppreſt,
Bearing about his Witneſs in his breſt.

4. *The Thoughts of the Gentiles did excuſe them, upon well doing.* They found a great ſatisfaction, in going according to the dictates of their own Conſciences; and this tended very much to their ſupport (*h*) under the greateſt calamities that befell them; their ſleep was ſweet, and ſo were their enjoyments; nay,

(*) Natal. Com. lib. c. 19.
(h) *Conſcientia rectæ voluntatis maxima conſolatio rerum incommodarum.* Cicero.

Adver-

Adverſity it ſelf was ſweetned, when Conſcience gave them its approbation. *Tully* ſpeaks excellently (i) *That is the part of one that would be Great and Wiſe, to put away Luſt, and Hatred, and Envy, and Fear, and all carnal Affections; and moſt of all to mind his Conſcience. This we have received from God, & this cannot be ſeparated from us. And if this be a witneſſe to us, that we follow and practiſe the beſt Counſel, our Life will be without Fear, and with the greateſt Honeſty.* You ſee what contentment and peace did enſue, when the Heathens made it their care not to go contrary to the light in their own minds. And though I dare not affirm, becauſe Conſcience did excuſe them, that God did juſtifie them, (for there is no way of being juſtified before God, that is revealed to us, but by Faith in our Lord Jeſus) yet 'tis not at all diſagreeable to Truth, to ſay that the ſatisfaction which they had, was ſome reward of their well-doing, and a very great encouragement thereunto. Thus it appears *by the light of Nature* that there is a Conſcience in Man.

2. This Truth is *more fully evident by Scripture.* This Book of Scripture has no Errour in it, 'tis given by inſpiration of God, who as he cannot be deceived himſelf, ſo he cannot lye unto others. *Titus* 1. 2. Now if you hearken to the Scripture, that there is a Conſcience may be proved many wayes.

1. *Conſcience is often expreſly ſpoken of.* The Lord who made Man, and who perfectly knowes what is

(i) *Illud vero eſt hominis magni & ſapientis, libidinem, odium, invidiam, metum, cupiditateſque omnes amovere; maximéque, æſtimare conſcientiam mentis ſuæ, quam ab Diis immortalibus accepimus, quæ à nobis divelli non poteſt. Quæ ſi optimorum conſiliorum atque factorum teſtis in omni vitâ nobis erit, ſine ullo metu, & ſummâ cum honeſtate vivemus.* Cicer. *Orat. pro* A. Cluentio.

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in Man; tells us of ſuch a thing as Conſcience. Not onely in the Text is Conſcience mentioned, but in divers other places. *Heb.* 9. 9. *Which was a figure* (ſpeaking of the Tabernacle) *for the time then preſent, in which were offered both Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins, which could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conſcience.* The Conſcience of Man could not be purified or purged by the Legal Sacrifices, but all theſe were typical of that Sacrifice which Chriſt offered up of himſelf unto God, which alone can *purge the Conſcience from dead Works*, Heb. 9. 14. So alſo 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. *We have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftyneſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth commending our ſelves to every mans Conſcience in the ſight of God.* We are to ſpeak unto Conſcience to commend our ſelves unto Conſcience: how could this be, were there not a Conſcience?

2. *That work of the Spirit called Conviction, proves a Conſcience.* When the Spirit comes to work upon any, he firſt convinces them of Sin, and afterwards of Righteouſneſs, *Joh.* 16. 8. he firſt ſhewes by what they are fallen, and then how they may be raiſed and recovered. But Conſcience is that which is the Subject of this Conviction. When Chriſt ſaid unto the Scribes and Phariſees, who brought an Adultereſs before him; *He that is without Sin among you let him firſt caſt a Stone at her* 'tis ſaid, *when they heard it, being convicted by their own Conſcience,* (k) *they went out one*

(k) *Apparet hic quam vis eſt malæ Conſcientiæ. Quum impii iſti hypocritæ Chriſtum ſuis cavillis eludere in animo haberent; ſimul tamen ac eorum conſcientias unâ voce pungit; perculſi diffugiunt hoc malleo frangenda eſt hypocritarum ſuperbia.* Calv. *in Johan.*

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by one, beginning at the eldeſt even unto the laſt, Joh. 8. 7, 9. When the Law came with power upon the Apoſtle, and 'twas interpreted, and the extent of it ſhewed by the Spirit, *Sin revived, and he died*, Rom. 7. 9. that is, his Conſcience was awakened to take notice of Sin, and he perceived, that he was a dead, condemned man by Law; and that there was no way to be delivered without a Mediator. In conviction the Conſcience is ſtruck at; there is the alarum heard, which cauſes ſuch Terrour and Confuſion; and if there were no Conſcience there could be no Conviction.

3. *Sinning againſt Conſcience highrens tranſgreſſion, but this ſuppoſes a Conſcience to be ſinned againſt.* Our Lord ſayes plainly, *He that knowes his Maſters will*, and goes againſt the Light of his Conſcience, *prepares not himſelf, nor does according to the will of his Lord, he ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes*, Luk. 12. 47. When ſinners do not like to retain God in their knowledge; when they are troubled becauſe Conſcience puts them in mind that the Lord obſerves them; when they impriſon as it were the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs, and ſtifle the Light that ſhins in them, becauſe they love the works of Darkneſs; this is to ſin with an high hand, and will add much both unto Guilt and Puniſhment.

4. *Several Duties which are injoyned and urged in Scripture, ſuppoſe a Conſcience in us, becauſe Conſcience is a Principal agent in the performance of them.* We are commanded *to ſearch and try our wayes*, that we may *turn unto the Lord our God*, Lam. 3. 40. but 'tis the work of Conſcience thus to call us to an account, and to examine how our Actions, and that Rule which is given us, have agreed together. We are commanded to *try and prove our ſelves, whether we be in the Faith, whether Chriſt be in us yea or no?* 2 Cor. 13. 5.

13. 5. Now 'tis Conſcience which takes notice of the Characters of true and unfeigned Faith which the holy Ghoſt has given; 'tis Conſcience alſo which applies theſe Characters; and then drawes the concluſion either that we are not believers if our Faith be dead, and we onely name the name of Chriſt, but have no will to depart from iniquity: or that we are Believers if our Faith purifie our hearts, if it work by love, if it overcome the world, ſo that all things are counted loſs that we may win Chriſt who is truly precious. Finally we are commanded *to judge our ſelves that we may not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor. 11. 31, 32. But this judging is an act of Conſcience. And truly it Judges under God, and by his Authority, and therefore its Judgement is the more to be minded.

5. All men in Scripture are divided *into good and bad, and in both there is a Conſcience.* The Apoſtle tells us, that in the *defiled and unbelieving there is a Conſcience though a polluted one.* Tit. 1. 15. and though for a while it may ſeem to be aſleep, though it may be ſo unfaithful as ſeldom to admoniſh; yet at length 'twill awake, and then 'twill be found that it knowes and remembers all misdoings. The Regenerate likewiſe have a Conſcience which is enlightned and purged, and renewed, by the Blood, and VVord, and Spirit of our Lord Jeſus.

3. As 'tis clear from Scripture, that there is a Conſcience in Man, *ſo 'tis evident by experience.* And here I ſhall make an appeal unto every ones ſenſe and obſervation, in three following queſtions.

1. *What*

1. *What is it that ſpeaks to you when* (*) *alone, and tells you that there is an All-ſeeing God, but Conſcience?* (l) 'Tis this which brings to your remembrance, that the Lord who is ſo holy is alwayes preſent, that no darkneſs or retired corner can hide you from him, *but he compaſſes your path and your lying down, and is acquainted with all your ways.*

2. *What is it but Conſcience that forbids the yeilding to temptations even unto the moſt ſecret ſins?* Secret places can hide the Sinner from the eye of man; and there are ſome Sins, namely heart wickednefſes which man can take no cognizance of: and yet we are checkt when we are giving way to theſe, which ſhewes there is a Conſcience as well as a God privy to them. When Satan and a deceitful Heart do plead for Sin, and perſwade to it by this argument, that never any are likely to know it; yet even then conſcience declares againſt it, and cryes out *Oh do not that abominable thing which God hates.* 'Twas well ſaid by one of the Ancients to the Gentiles: *Vos conſcios timetis, nos conſcientiam.* You are afraid leſt others ſhould be conſcious to what you do, we fear even our own Conſciences.

3. *What is it but Conſcience that impreſſes a fear of a Judgment which is to come?* (m) It many times with

(*) *Nemo minus ſolus, quam cum ſolus.*

(l) *NOTE.* Whenever Conſcience performs its office aright, tis inlightned and acted by the Spirit of God. The Spirit therefore is to be acknowledged, for without him Conſcience would have no light or life or power or feeling.

(m) *Beatus erit quisquis non ſine memoriâ divini judicii omnia geſſerit.* Hillar. in Pſal. 118.

Rythm. Bernard.

Expaveſco miſer multum,
Judicis ſeveri vultum.
Quem latebit nil occultum,
Nec manebit quid inultum.

Et quis noſtrûm non timebit,
Quando Judex apparebit,
Ante quem ignis ardebit,
Peccatores qui delebit?

a great deal of Power does mind us of such Scriptures: *God has appointed a day wherein he will Judge the World in Righteousness*, Acts 17. 31. *We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. 5. 10. And Conscience knowing these Terrors of the Lord, perswade Men to Repentance, and to labour, that whether present or absent, they may be accepted of him. 'Twas a saying of *Tertullian*, *Conscientia est præ-judicium extremi judicii.* Conscience is a Judging before the last Judgment; but still it tells of, and referrs to the last Judgment, that hereby the Heart may be over-awed.

4. *What is it but Conscience which urges unto secret Duties, the Omission of which the World can take no notice of?* There is a Monitor within us, which tells us that *our Father is, and sees in secret, and will reward openly* such as secretly and sincerely seek him, *Mat.* 6. When our Hearts (the desperate wickedness whereof is not quite cured in the best of us) draw back from Prayer in the Closet, Conscience then presses to it, and pleads the Command, the Advantage, what an Evidence 'tis of uprightness to be often with God alone. This same Monitor likewise puts us upon the searching into, and study of the Scripture, for 'tis the Character and property of the Blessed Man *to have his Delight in the Law of the Lord, and in that Law to Meditate Day and Night*, Psal. 1. 2.

5. *What is it but Conscience that applies Truths particularly, which are more generally delivered in the Ministry of the Gospel?* I grant indeed that this application is the Work of the Spirit of God, but the Conscience of Man is made use of herein by the Holy Spirit. The Preacher shoots a great many Arrows.

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The Spirit does direct them to particular Perſons, and Conſcience takes notice where the Arrow ſticks. The ſame Language which was in the Prophet *Nathan*'s Mouth to *David* after his ſo foul a fall, is in the Mouth of Conſcience. The Word ſpeaks in the general, *The Soul that ſins ſhall dye, the Wages of Sin is Death.* But then Conſcience crys out, *Thou art the man that haſt ſinned*, and therefore Death and Deſtruction will quickly over-take thee, unleſs there be a coming by Faith unto a Saviour, and a turning out of thy Deſtructive ways.

6. *What is it but Conſcience which does comment upon Afflictions?* Folly is bound up in thy heart, ſays Conſcience, therefore thou feeleſt the Rod to drive it far from thee. Thou art Worldly-minded, therefore thou meeteſt with Loſſes to wean thee from that, which if ſtill doated on, will both deceive and ruine thee. Thou art too much like a ſlothful Servant, therefore, ſays Conſcience, Affliction is ſent to make thee mend thy pace, and follow them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes. (*n*) When *Joſeph*'s Brethren were all put into Ward in *Egypt*, their Conſciences commented upon their Reſtraint, and brought their injurious handling of their Brother to remembrance, *Gen.* 42. 21. *And they ſaid one to another we are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his Soul when he beſought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this Diſtreſs come upon us.*

7. *What is it but Conſcience that traces us in all our Actions?* Conſcience takes notice what Principles we are Acted by, what Ends we aim at; it Obſerves both

(n) ——*Tempeſtuous times*
Amaze poor mortals and object their crimes. Herbert.

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the Matter and the Manner of our Actions. Conscience Examines whether Love to the Lord constrain us to his Work, whether the pleasing, honouring, and enjoying of God be our great Design, whether our Hearts and Affections be in our Services. After thy Praying, and Hearing, and Receiving are ended, doest thou not find something within thee, running over all thy performances, and calling thee to Account, whether thou hast Prayed with Faith and Fervency, whether thou hast heard believingly and with attention, whether thou hast received worthily? This is Conscience.

8. *What is it but Conscience which haunts us upon miscarriages?* Its Mouth is full of Reproaches, and these Reproaches are unanswerable. After sins, especially presumptuous ones have been committed, there is a secret gnawing within, and that is the Worm of Conscience. (o) *Plutarch* compares the pleasure of sin which is offered in Temptation, unto a Bait, and this is presently and greedily devoured, but afterwards Conscience, as an Hook, holds the sinner, and does torment him. 'Tis a sore trouble to have an House that is really haunted with Spirits, to be disturbed with noises, voices, and frighting Apparitions. 'Tis likewise exceeding grievous to be haunted with an evil Conscience, to have this continually Objecting the guilt which we have contracted, and affrighting us with the Wrath of God, the Chains of Darkness, and the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, which are threatned against the Workers of Iniquity.

9. *'Tis Conscience reflecting upon our sincerity which produces such Peace and Satisfaction.* The Persons

(o) Ἔχεται γὰρ ἕκαστος ἀδικήσας τῇ δίκῃ, καὶ τὸ γλυκὺ τῆς ἀδικίας ὥσπερ δέλεαρ εὐθὺς ἐξε δήδοκε τὸ δὲ συνειδὸς ἐγκείμενον ἔχων καὶ ἀποτίνων θύννος βολαῖος πέλαγος ὡς διαστροβεῖ. Plutarch. *De his qui sero à Numine puniuntur*, pag. mihi 554.

whom

whom we converſe with, and that take notice of our Actions, are not competent Judges of our ſincerity; for 'tis not in their Power to look into our Hearts: But Conſcience, as it does diſcern, ſo it approves uprightneſs. That *Italian* Philoſopher and Poet, *Petrarch*, has an Excellent ſaying, *What though thy Neighbours celebrate thy Name? they deceive one another, and all deceive thee. Be not lifted up with the Teſtimony of others, there is within thee a more uncorrupted and certain Witneſs, and that's thy Conſcience; ask this concerning thy ſelf, and give credit to it.* And in another place he ſays, (p) *The People will make thee known, Vertue will make thee Famous, but 'tis Conſcience approving thee that makes thee comfortable and ſecure.*

Oh Conſcience, how inſuperable are thy Conſolations! Though Satan the Accuſer of the Brethren call me *Hypocrite*, though *Romiſh* Pſeudo-Catholicks do call me *Heretick*, though furious and uncharitable Proteſtants do call me *Schiſmatick*, yet if Conſcience rightly informed by the Word of God ſay I am ſincere, I ſhall have Peace, whoever endeavour to diſturb me.

Thus have I proved at large that there is a Conſcience in Man. I now add theſe following particulars.

1. *This thing, called Conſcience, is in every one*; there is no Man without it. You may as well ſuppoſe a Man without an Underſtanding as without a Conſcience; and without a power to know any thing, as without a power to reflect upon himſelf. Every reaſonable Soul, being capable both of Sin and Grace, is endued with a power of reflecting upon it ſelf, that ſin may be

(p) *Vulgus te notum faciet, virtus clarum, conſcientia ſecurum* Petrarch.

condemned, and Grace may be approved. All are called upon *to conſider their ways*, Hag. 1. 5. 7. but to take our own ways into conſideration, is the work of Conſcience, Conſcience therefore is in all. Let none therefore ſin preſumptuouſly and ſecurely, as if they had no Conſcience at preſent to Obſerve them, or at any time to Reproach and torture them.

2. This Conſcience, *when awakened, will deal plainly with the greateſt.* It regards not the high Eſtate of Perſons, but will tell them their own without Flattery. *Pharaoh* at firſt crys out, *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould Obey his Voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Iſrael go*, Exod. 5. 2. But afterwards the Lords Miracles which he wrought, and the Plagues which he inflicted upon the *Egyptians*, awakened the Conſcience of *Pharaoh*, and he crys out unto *Moſes* and *Aaron*, *I have ſinned, the Lord is Righteous, and I and my People are wicked*, Exod. 9. 27. He ſpeaks this Language unto *Moſes*, becauſe Conſcience had before ſpoken the ſame Language to him, and had told him of his ſin and wickedneſs, and the Righteouſneſs of that God whom he had exalted himſelf againſt.

Conſcience did flie in the Face of *Belſhazzar*, though ſo great a Monarch, when the Hand did write his doom upon the Wall, and put him into ſuch a conſternation, * *that his countenance was changed, the joynts of his Loins were looſed, and his Knees ſmote one againſt another*, Dan. 5 6. After King *Henry* the Firſt had put out the Eyes of *Robert* his Eldeſt Brother, and had loſt *William* his Eldeſt and onely Son in a Storm at Sea, this ſudden clap of Gods Judgment did make his Conſcience ſhrink with terror; his ſleeps were very tumultuous and full of Affrightments, wherein he would often

(*) Sa. Danyel. *Life and Reign of Henry* 1 pag. 65, 66.

often riſe, and take his Sword, and be in Act as if he defended himſelf againſt aſſaults of his Perſon: And the Hiſtorian ſays, the King was never ſeen to Laugh afterwards. Sir *Walter Rawleigh* Obſerves, how the Conſciences of Kings have been ſtartled when Death has been within view, and have forced them to do what before they refuſed, and then adds theſe words, (*) *O eloquent, juſt, and mighty Death! whom none could adviſe, thou haſt perſwaded; what none hath dared, thou haſt done; and whom all the World hath flattered, thou onely haſt caſt out of the World and deſpiſed: thou haſt drawn together all the far-ſtretched greatneſs, all the Pride, Cruelty, and Ambition of Man, and cover'd it over with theſe two narrow words,* Hic jacet, *here it all lies buried.* Conſcience reſpects not the Perſons of Princes, but will flie in the Face of the proudeſt of them when God does give it a Commiſſion.

3. *Conſcience is not to be eſcaped*; we can no more flie from Conſcience than we can run away from our ſelves. When the Lord gives this Officer a Command and Power to ſpeak, we are forced to hear it: as *David* ſpeaks concerning God himſelf, *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? Whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my Bed in Hell, behold, thou art there; if I take the wings of the Morning and fly to the uttermoſt parts of the Sea, thy Hand will reach me; if I ſay the darkneſs ſhall cover me, the Night ſhall be light about me,* Pſal. 139. 7---11. So truly theſe words may in part be applyed unto Conſcience. *Whither ſhall we go from our own Spirits? whither ſhall we flee from the preſence of our Conſciences? 'Twill go after us to Heaven, 'twill follow us down to Hell; if we travel into*

(*) Hiſt. of the World, lib. 5. c. 6. Sect. 12. pag. 669.

the remotest Regions, we cannot shake off Conscience, but 'twill be our Companion and Observer. No darkness can hide any thing from its view, but the Night shineth as the Day, the darkness and the light are both alike to it. *Hieroclus* upon *Pythagoras* calls Conscience φύλακα οἰκειότατον καὶ ἀναπόδραστον *a Keeper most intimate and unavoidable.* Nec fugere nec fugare potes, *You can neither fly from it, nor cause it to fly from you.*

Very Devout is that Meditation of *Bernard.* (q) My sins I am not able to conceal, because where ever I go my Conscience is continually with me, and carries with it what I have put in it, whether it be good or evil. It keeps for me living, it will restore to me dying, what I have delivered to be kept by it. If I do evil, Conscience is present; if I seem to do good, and am lifted up with Pride, Conscience is present. It accompanies me all my Life long; 'twill follow me after Death, and will be my inseparable either Glory or Confusion, according to the Quality of what it has Observed in me. Thus, thus in my own House, in my own Soul, I have Accusers, Witnesses, Judges, Tormentors, if I dare to give way unto Iniquity.

4. Though Conscience may seem to be quite banished, and for the present does no more its Office, than if there were no such thing, yet this Exiled and Banished

(q) *Peccata mea celare non possum quoniam quocunque vado conscientia mea mecum est, secum portans quid in eâ posui, sive bonum sive malum: Servat vivo, restituet defuncto depositum quod servandum accepit. Si malè facio adest illa, si autem bene facere videor & inde extollor, adest illa: adest vivo, sequitur mortuum; ubique mihi gloria vel confusio inseparabilis pro qualitate depositi. Sic sic in domo propriâ, à propriâ familiâ, habeo accusatores, testes, judices & tortores.* Bernard. Meditat. devot. cap. 13. pag. (mihi) 1060.

thing

thing will at laſt return; or to ſpeak more properly, this Conſcience, that was imagined to be in a dead ſleep, or altogether careleſs, will ſhew that it has been too much preſent with the guilty all along. Theſe ſix particulars are here to be Obſerved.

1. *Some great Affliction may awaken Conſcience.* When the Widow with whom *Elijah* ſojourned, her Son fell ſick, and his ſickneſs was ſo ſore, that there was no breath left in him, her Conſcience was exceedingly ſtartled, and ſhe ſaid to *Elijah*, *What have I to do with thee, O thou Man of God, art thou come unto me to call my ſin to remembrance, and to ſlay my Son?* 1 Kings 17. 17, 18. The Locuſts which were ſo very grievous that came over all the Land of *Egypt*, extorted a Confeſſion from *Pharaoh*'s Conſcience, though his Heart was before hardned: *He called for* Moſes *and* Aaron *in haſte, and ſaid, I have ſinned againſt the Lord and againſt you; now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my ſin this once, and intreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this Death onely*, Exod. 10. 16, 17. How does Affliction give new Eyes, and make ſin appear in other colours than before it ſeemed to have! When the Body of a ſinner is firſt ſtruck with a Diſeaſe, and the mind apprehends this Sickneſs may prove deadly, and that now being Arreſted, the ſinner muſt quickly appear before the Judgment-ſeat. Ohthen, what a commotion is there in the Soul, and how fierce and clamourous is the Conſcience which before was deeply ſilent!

2. *Conſcience may awake after a fall into ſome ſcandalous ſin.* When the long covered Hypocriſie is detected, and the ſly ſinner which waxed worſe and worſe, and yet was ſecure, at length does commit ſome ſin that the World crys ſhame on: Oh then Con-

ſcience may joyn in with the VVorlds clamors, (r) and tell him that now his ſin has found him out, and that Heaven has revealed his iniquity, and that becauſe *he has deſpiſed God, he has been ſuffered to do that which has made himſelf to be lightly eſteemed.*

3. *Conſcience may awake at the hearing of a powerful Sermon.* The meſſengers of the Lord are commanded to lift up *their Voices like a Trumpet*, and the deſign is to ſtartle Conſcience, and that ſinners may be made ſenſible of *and to know their Tranſgreſſions*, *Iſaiah* 58. 1. God ſpeaks thus to the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *chap.* 6. 11. *Smite with thine hand, and ſtamp with thy foot, and ſay, Alas! for all the evil abominations of the Houſe of Iſrael.* Theſe geſtures, this earneſtneſs and crying out of abominations, is uſed to affect the Hearts which before were ſtupid. And truly the VVord of God has oftentimes taken impreſſion, even upon thoſe whoſe Souls were more than ordinarily ſenſeleſs. The Apoſtles hearers were mockers, and yet the VVord being ſet home they *were pricht at the Heart*, (*and ſaid,*) *Men and Brethren what ſhall we do? Act.* 2. 37. Now when the VVord does awaken the Conſcience there is more ground to hope that God has a deſign to work a ſaving change, and that the troubles of Spirit are but as it were the pangs which fore-run the new Birth.

4. *Conſcience may awake when Death is within view.* I grant indeed that 'tis too common for the ungodly to dy ſtupid, and that *there may be no bands in their death*, *Pſal.* 73. but yet experience ſhews that the approach of death does alſo fill many ungodly ones with horrour and amazement. What made *Be-*

(r) *Non aurem ſolam percutit iracundia criminantis, verum etiam conſcientiam mordet veritas criminis.* Auguſt. l. 3. contra lit. Petilian. Tom. 7.

Iaan

laam to cry out, *let me dye the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his? Num.* 23. 10. Surely he had pre-apprehenſions how terrible a thing 'tis for the ungodly to dye. When nature is almoſt ſpent and the earthly Tabernacle is tottering and falling to the ground; when Phyſicians are at a loſſe, and friends ſtand by weeping, and 'tis whiſpered in the room, *Alas he cannot live many hours to an end.* Ah then Conſcience may wake in terrible fright and the ſinner may be confounded, and as death comes with its ſting, ſo it may prove indeed the King of terrours.

5. *To be ſure at judgment Conſcience will be awaked thoroughly*, though ſinners poſſibly may look death, yet they cannot look the Judge in the face without being daunted. He will ſtrike terrour into the Hearts of thoſe ſinners that were moſt obſtinate and unbelieving. VVe read that at the great day, *the Books will be opened, Rev.* 20. 12. The Book of Scripture will be opened, for by that every one muſt be judged. *The Word that I have ſpoken*, ſayes Chriſt, *the ſame ſhall judge at the laſt day.* The book of Conſcience will alſo be opened, and what things are found written there, will be taken notice of, and muſt be anſwered for. No Conſcience at that day can be ſtupid. The Heavens paſſing away with a great noiſe, and the Elements melting with fervent heat, and the Earth and the works therein being all in a flame: every unjuſtified and unſanctified ſinners Heart will ſmite him; and as the Judge will condemn him, ſo he will be condemned by his own Conſcience. *Chryſoſtome* (s) adviſes

(s) Ἕκαστος τοίνυν εἰς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ συνειδὸς ἐλθὼν, καὶ ἀναλογιζόμενος τὰ πλημμελήματα, ἀπαιτείτω τὰς εὐθύνας ἑαυτοῦ ἀκριβῶς. ἵνα τότε μὴ κατακριθῶμεν μετὰ τῆς οἰκουμένης. Φοβερὸν γὰρ ἐκεῖνο τὸ δικαστήριον, φρικτὸν βῆμα, τρόμου γέμουσιν αἱ εὐθύναι, πυρὸς ἕλκεται ποταμὸς Chryſ. in Epiſt. ad Rom. λόγ. 8.

every one to look into his own Conscience presently, and to be strict in self-searching that he may not be condemned with the world, for 'tis a dreadful Tribunal which all must appear before, and the trial of every one will be thorow, and impartial.

6. *Conscience will be with the ungodly in Hell to all Eternity.* Could we go down indeed to the gates of Hell, and have some discourse with the damned there, and ask them concerning their Consciences, they would answer that a great part of Hell lyes there, and that they feel within them a Worm continually gnawing, and which will never dye: they would answer, that their Consciences now cannot be silenced, that there is no respite from their clamours, that they are continually upbraiding them with their madnesse in sinning; and their more than madness in refusing to turn to God, and to come to Christ for Life and for Salvation. *Barnard* has a very useful passage. (t) *'Tis best of all* says he, *that Worm of Conscience should be felt presently while 'tis possible to destroy this Worm. Let it bite now that it may dye, and by degrees give over biting at all. Let it feed upon and eat away corruption, that it self also may at length be consumed; for 'tis sad to cherish this worm against hereafter, for then the worm will never dye, and the Fire will never be quenched.*

I have finished that first particular, which was to

(t) *Optimum est tunc sentiri vermem conscientiæ cùm possit etiam suffocari: itaque mordeat nunc ut moriatur, & paulatim desinat mordere. Mordendo rodat interim putredinem, & rodendo consumat, ut ipse quoque pariter Consumatur, nec foveri incipiat in immortalitatem. Vermis inquit eorum non morietur, & ignis eorum non extinguetur.* Bernard. *de Conversione ad Clericos*, cap. 6. pag. 845.

prove

prove that *there is a Conscience in Man.* In the second place I am to tell you *what this Conscience is.* And first I shall speak *of the Name.* And secondly, of *the thing it self.*

1. I shall speak of the Name. *Conscience* (in Latin *Conscientia*, into which the Greek word συνείδησις which the Holy Ghost uses in the original, is very well translated) is so called for several reasons.

1. 'Tis called Conscience, because 'tis *Cordis scientia* (*u*) the knowledge of the Heart. The Heart of Man is capable of knowing it self and other things; when it understands other things this is *science*, but when it reflects upon it self this is *Conscience.* And indeed the Heart is in a special manner observed, both by Conscience, and by the Lord himself. Conscience if it be rightly informed, will not be contented with a Conversation which Men look upon as blameless; unless the Heart be upright and pure. (*) If a man harbour malice in his breast, Conscience will charge him with Murther. If he look upon a Woman to lust after her, it will call him before God, Adulterer. If he abound never so much in profession, and external performances, yet if when he honours God with his lips, his Heart be removed far from him; Conscience will say he is a meer Hypocrite.

2. 'Tis called Conscience because it is *concludens scientia*, a concluding knowledge, which is gathered from some premises that went before. Conscience therefore is styled by some a practical Syllogism, in

(*u*) *Conscientia est cordis scientia, cor enim & se novit, & multa alia; cùm se novit appellatur, Conscientia; cùm præter se alia, nominatur Scientia.* Bernard. *de Interior. dom.* cap. 22.

(*) *Nam scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum,*
Facti crimen habet ——— Juv.

which

which the major or firſt propoſition is the VVord of God, the minor or ſecond propoſition is from a reflecting on our ſelves, whether we have done according unto or againſt the VVord of God. And the concluſion, is a paſſing ſentence upon our ſelves, according to the ſame VVord. The Scripture ſays, *To be carnally minded is death*; and the Conſcience of a ſinner, adds, *but I am carnally minded, and I ſavour nothing elſe but what is carnal*, and *therefore I am a Childe of Death*. And again thus, *He that loves the World, the Love of the Father is not in him*; but ſayes the Conſcience of a worlding, *I love the World, am greedy after it, and deſire nothing comparable to it*, therefore *I neither Love the Father, nor have an intereſt in his Love*. On the other hand, the Scripture affirms, *He that receives Chriſt is the Son of God*, but ſayes the Believers Conſcience. *I am willing to receive Chriſt, to rule me, and to ſave me*; therefore *I am the childe of God*. And again; *thoſe are bleſſed that Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs*; but ſayes the Believers Conſcience, *I Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs, I deſire to be made truly Holy, to be ſanctified throughout in Body, Soul, and Spirit*, therefore *I am in a bleſſed State*.

3. 'Tis called Conſcience, becauſe it is *cum alio ſcientia*, a knowledge together with ſome other. Conſcience ſuppoſes that we are known to ſome other, as well as to our ſelves, and this is the beſt reaſon why 'tis called Conſcience. But you will ask me who does know us as well as our ſelves?

1. *The all-ſeeing God does know us perfectly.* (x) The

(x) Συνειδησις, *quia ſciamus cum legiſlatore Deo; ejus lege inſinuante ſe animis noſtris, & his idem teſtantibus.* Voſſius, *de Orig. & prog. Idol.* l. 3. c. 42.

Apoſtle

Apostle tells us that *there is not any Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do. Heb.*4.13. The Psalmist speaks to the same purpose, *Psal.* 94.8,9, 10. *Understand, O ye brutish among the People, and ye Fools when will ye be wise? He that planted the Ear shall He not Hear? He that formed the Eye, shall He not See? He that Teacheth man Knowlege, shall not He Know?* Questionless His Eyes run too and fro, beholding the Evil and the Good. And indeed if there were not a God who knows us as well, nay, better than we do our selves; we should not regard our own being privy to our wickedness; there is so much Self-Love, that we should not stand in awe of our own knowledge: but when we consider that the Lord also knows us, this causes Grief, and Fear, and Trouble when we do Evil.

2. *Our Lord Jesus who is ready to judge the quick and dead, does also know our works.* In all those Epistles which he sends to the seven Churches of *Asia*, he sayes, *I know thy works.* 'Tis expressly said, that *Jesus knew all men, and needed not that any should testifie of Man, for he knew what was in Man. John* 2.24.25. He understands the very secrets of the Heart, as well as what appears in the practice: and our Lord being to give every one his final doom, and to passe that sentence which can never be repealed, surely his knowledge should damp the fiercest Temptations, and make us diligent that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

3. *The Elect Angels are witnesses of more than we are aware of.* Upon this score it is that the Apostle in his charge to *Timothy*, mentions the Angels, as well as God and Christ. 1 *Tim.*5.21. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels*

that

that thou obſerve theſe things. Sayes *Calvin*, (y) he adjoyns the Angels to Chriſt, not as if they were to be Judges, but becauſe they are witneſſes of our miſcarriages. The work of the Angels lies very much here in the Church Militant, they are Miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to Miniſter for them that are Heirs of Salvation; they rejoyce at the Converſion of a Sinner; and ſurely then the ſins of men diſpleaſe them, and they are ready upon Gods command to be the inſtruments of his revenging juſtice upon thoſe who dare to Rebel againſt him.

4. *The Devils who are ready to be our Accuſers, are alſo our Obſervers*: They tempt us to ſin, and if we yeild to their Temptations, are forward to cry out againſt us. Satan indeed is a Spirit, and ſo inviſible; but We are not inviſible: he knows where we are, and what we do; nay, he can give a very ſhrode gheſſe at our very thoughts, and he does accordingly ſuit his baits and Temptations with marvellous ſubtlety. And becauſe the Enemy obſerves us, and if we do wickedly, though ſecretly, will accuſe us before God and take advantage againſt us to get us more under his power; therefore it infinitely concerns us to be *ſober and vigilant againſt this Adverſary, and to reſiſt him, being ſtedfaſt in the Faith, who goes about like a Roaring Lion ſeeking whom he may devour.* 1. *Pet.* 5. 8.

Thus you ſee the reaſon of the Name Conſcience, it implies that others know us together with our ſelves. Ah! let us not flatter our ſelves with hopes of ſecrecy in ſinning. More eyes than we imagine, behold

(y) *Angelos Chriſto adjungit, non tanquam Judices ſed tanquam futuros teſtes negligentiæ aut temeritatis, ambitionis aut malæ fidei, adſunt enim ſpectatores propter injunctam ſibi eccleſiæ curam.* Calvin.

us when we are committing the most concealed abominations. Devils look on, for they egg us to them: Angels look on and are angry. God looks on, who hates Sin with a most perfect hatred. Christ also takes notice, whose wrath is terrible; for who can appease it? whose Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, and who has said, *I will make all the Churches to know that I am he which Searcheth the Reines and Hearts, and I will render to every Man according to his Deeds*, Rev. 2. 23.

2. Thus of the name Conscience, next of the thing it self. And here I shall not trouble you with those debates and disputes in the Schools about Conscience. I shall not take up time in determining those questions, whether Conscience be a distinct faculty in the Soul, from the understanding, or an Act of it? whether 'tis to be restrained to the understanding, or belongs also to the will and affections? whether it be an habit or no? These and such like questions will have a small influence unto the bettering of Conscience, and therefore I wave them.

Origen gives this description of Conscience, that (z) *It is a Spirit which accompanies the Soul as a Schoolmaster and corrector, whereby 'tis separated from what is evil, and adheres and cleaves to what is good.* If by Spirit here *Origen* mean a good *Genius* or *Angel* (as some interpret him:) then 'tis to be reckoned among his phancyes which have no Scripture-foundation: but if by Spirit, he mean a mans own Spirit, then 'tis a profitable description; for Conscience is indeed a Schoolmaster to instruct us in

(z) *Spiritus corrector & pædagogus animæ socialis, quo separatur à malis & adhæret bonis.* Origen. lib. 2. *in ep. ad Rom.*

our

our Duty, and 'twill correct us sharply when we sin, and the lashes given by this Corrector are very dreadful; and that which Conscience aims at, is, that we may be deterr'd from Sin, and follow after Righteousnesse.

Aquinas defines Conscience after this manner; (a) *Conscience is an act whereby we apply our knowledge unto those things which we do.* Now he makes three wayes of applying our knowledge; 1. When we take notice what we have done, or not done; and so Conscience is said to Testifie. 2. When we judge that this or that is to be done, or not to be done; and so Conscience is said to Binde. 3. When we pronounce what we have done, to be well or ill done, and so Conscience is said to Excuse, or to be full of Remorse.

Amesius tells us, that (b) *Conscience is a Mans judgment of himself, as he is subject unto the judgement of God.* The Lord has given unto Man his Word for his Rule, and the Lord himself will be his judge, now Conscience is perswaded that this judgement is certain, and that an account of our selves and actions must shortly be rendred; therefore it passes a judgement presently. It meddles not so much with others, only so far as Duty towards them is to be performed; or we make our selves partakers of their Sins. But Conscience has chiefly to do with our selves; and truly it tryes and judges concerning both our Estates and Actions, whether we be in an Estate of Nature or of Grace, whether our Actions be Good or Evil.

(a) *Conscientia est actus quo scientiam nostram ad ea quæ agimus applicamus.* Aquin. primæ Qu. 79. artic. 13.

(b) *Conscientia est judicium hominis de seipso, prout subjicitur judicio Dei.* Ames. De Cons. lib. 1. cap. 1.

Others

Others do call Conscience, *the Soul of Man recoiling and reflecting upon it self.* These Recoyls are Terrible and beat us to the Ground, nay strike us down to the very brink of Hell many times; when we look back upon our miscarriages, and our Sins are set in order before us, and our eyes are held waking, so that we can neither shut them nor look away. These reflections also are accompanied with great pleasure, when the Lord does work in us both to will and to do that which is good of his own good pleasure, and then shines upon his own workmanship; so that we know both that God has made us upright, *and takes Pleasure in our uprightness.* 1 Chron. 29. 17.

But the Definition which I shall give you of Conscience, and at large Explain, is this; *Conscience is a power of the Soul in Man, whereby we understanding the Will of God, are impell'd to comply with it; and do bear witnesse concerning our selves and actions, and accordingly judge, that is, acquit or condemn our selves.* This Definition I shall take into parts that you may the better understand it.

1. *Conscience is a Power in the Soul of Man.* 'Tis a Power or faculty becauſe it produceth acts, and is not got or loſt as habits are; but is inſeparable from the Soul, immoveable from the Subject. I will not affirm that Conſcience is really diſtinct from the underſtanding; but 'tis the underſtanding it ſelf acting by way of Reflection. The Underſtanding does Act directly, when it apprehends what is True and Falſe, what is Good and Bad; Abſolutely and without Reſpect. But it Acts by way of Reflection, when it applyes what it apprehends, and Reflects thus; Is that which is True and Good embraced, which is ſo worthy of all

Accep-

Acceptation? Is that which is Evil and Falſe, Rejected and abhorred?

This Power call'd Conſcience is very notable: the Eyes of the Body indeed, can look every where but inward; but the Eyes of the Soul can look within as well as abroad. And this looking within is very needful, and of great uſe; for till we come to know our ſelves, we ſhall know nothing elſe after a right manner. The Heathen Poet complains, ---*Nemo in ſeſe tentat deſcendere, Nemo*; No man does endeavour to deſcend into himſelf; But Conſcience taking the Word, which is the candle of Lord, does thus Deſcend, and makes a Diſcovery of us to our ſelves.

2. *Conſcience implies ſome knowledge of the Will of God.* Knowledge is the Light which Conſcience is directed by, and the Will and Law of God is that which binds the Conſcience. (c) The Will of God is not onely underſtood, but alſo an aſſent is yeilded to it, and there is a perſwaſion, that 'tis indeed his Will; Hence 'tis that conſcience does more peremptorily call for Subjection to it. VVere there no Light or Underſtanding of the Lords will, Conſcience could not Act at all. There is a threefold Light which is given for the illumination of Conſcience, that Gods Will and Mans Duty may be the better underſtood: *Natural, Moral, Evangelical.*

1. *The Light of Nature does diſcover many things, and informs the Conſcience of ſeveral duties*; though this Light does not tell us one word of Chriſt in whom

(*) *Perſeus.* Satyr. 4.

(c) *Diſtinguitur Conſcientia à nudâ veritatis apprehenſione, aſſenſum enim aliquem, eumque firmum inſeſe continet ſemper.* Ameſius. *De Conſc.* lib. 1. cap. 1.

we

we have Righteouſneſs to juſtifie us, and Strength to perform what God requires; yet when Men are about to Sin, this Light does oppoſe many of the works of Darkneſs; and ſo renders them the more inexcuſable, when they give way to their iniquities. The Lord is pleaſed to grant the Light of Nature to them unto whom the Goſpel never came, and by a diligent improvment of this one Talent, how many Sins might they avoid, which being committed will make their miſery the greater in another world. Conſcience was buſie in the very Gentiles, and told them that ſuch and ſuch things were forbidden, but the reſtraints of Conſcience were but feeble. (*d*) Therefore *Medea* cryes out *Though I ſee and approve what is good, yet I follow and practiſe what is evil.* And *Horace* complaines, *Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas.* Conſcience tells mankind that wickedneſs is forbidden, and yet notwithſtanding they ruſh into it, and are at length ruined by it.

Though Chriſtians who enjoy the Oracles of God, have from thence a fuller underſtanding of the Lords VVill; yet the Light of Nature is not to be neglected. And thoſe Sins which are againſt the Light of Nature, as injuſtice, perjury, whoredome and the like, are carefully to be Eſchewed: And ſuch abominations will be the more Abominable if Acted by thoſe who have a further light than that of Nature to inſtruct them.

2. There is *a Light which may be called Moral*, whereby Conſcience is informed concerning the will of God. This Light ſhined, as it were, from Mount *Sinai* when it was on fire, and the Lord was pleaſed to

(d) ——*Video meliora proboque*
Deteriora ſequor——

ſpeak himſelf the ten Words or Commandments to the People. Theſe Commandments are delivered at large, *Exod.* 20. and in theſe he does more fully ſhew us what is good, and what he does require of us; and indeed nothing but what is good in it ſelf, good to us, is required; and hereby our Obligation to Obedience is heightned, when the Authority of the Law-giver, and the profitableneſs of the Laws go hand in hand together. A great part of the Scripture is but the Commentary which the Holy Spirit himſelf has made upon the ten Commandments: and truly the Commentary and the Text are of equal Authority, and both alike to be regarded by the Conſcience.

That Scripture, *Eph.* 5. 31. *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger be put away from you, with all kind of malice,* is a Commentary upon that Precept, *Thou ſhalt not kill.* And that Scripture, *Gal.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your Members upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Inordinate affection, and evil concupiſcence,* is a Commentary upon that Commandmandment, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.* I might inſtance in the reſt, to ſhew that the Commands of God are exceeding broad, and extend not onely to the whole Converſation, but even to the very thoughts and affections: there is not one Member of our Bodies but is under a Law, to be employed *as an Inſtrument of Righteouſneſs unto Holineſs,* Rom. 6. 19. There is no power of our Souls but God requires it ſhould be ſubject to him, and exerciſed for him. The Law is ſo pure and Spiritual, that it cannot allow of a wicked thought, of a carnal deſire, of a bad intent or deſign. All this Conſcience muſt be informed of, that it may be the more faithful in charging us to endeavour after an univerſal Obedience, and conformity of our whole man unto the will of God.

3. *There*

3. *There is a Light which may be ſtiled Evangelical.* The Light of the Goſpel alſo ſerves to enlighten the Conſcience; 'tis called by the Apoſtle, *the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God*, 1 Tim. 1. 11. and from God the Author of it, does flow its Authority, to bind the Conſcience to Obey it. The Goſpel as it contains Promiſes *exceeding great and precious*, ſo alſo Precepts which are ſo ſuited unto our preſent ſtate, as that by the power of the ſpecial Grace of God which is vouchſafed to us, we are able to Obey. So that *though the Law is weak through the Fleſh*, and we are not able to keep it, and obtain Life by that means; yet the Goſpel does abate of the Laws rigour; and if we believe in Jeſus, and are holy in ſincerity, notwithſtanding we fall ſhort of abſolute perfection; our Grace being true ſhall through Chriſt be accepted and rewarded.

'Tis well that Conſcience is to be directed by the Light of the Goſpel, for the Law (c) conſidered in it ſelf, and not in the hand of a Mediator, can diſcover nothing to the Conſcience of a Tranſgreſſor, but matter of horror and deſperation: For the Law being broken, Life is loſt, and the curſe is due; nay, every tranſgreſſion has power ſufficient to lay us under the curſe, *Gal.* 3. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them*: and having thundered out the curſe, the Law leaves a Man under it, and does not tell him of any Remedy. But now the Goſpel commands Repentance, which the Law allows not of, and encourages to Repentance, by aſſuring us, if we Repent we ſhall not periſh, but *our ſins ſhall be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord*,

(c) *Nihil gravius, nihil miſeriùs conſcientiâ territâ lege Dei & conſpectu peccatorum.* Luther. Tom. 4. in Pſal. 128.

Acts 3. 19. The Goſpel alſo does command a ſinner to come to Chriſt, to believe in him, 1 *John* 3. 23. *This is his commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* That is, that we receive him as Lord and Saviour, and accept thoſe benefits of pardon, Grace, and Glory which he has purchaſed, and freely proffers to us. And thus by this command Conſcience is obliged to do that as a Duty, which is one of the greateſt Priviledges imaginable.

You ſee what bindes the Conſcience, namely, *the will of God diſcovered*; partly, by the Light of Nature, but principally by the Law and Goſpel. (*f*) All theſe Diſcoveries of the will of God are to be kept ſafe in the Conſcience; one part of which is therefore called Συντήρησις, ἀπὸ τῦ συντηρεῖν, which ſignifies to keep; becauſe practical Truths are to be Treaſured up there: we muſt be acquainted what is the will of God, and do that will as well as underſtand it, The adequate Rule of Conſcience is the will of God, and of this will in his Word there is the fulleſt Revelation; here mans Duty is preſcribed and ſhewn, and ſo far as the Word commands, Conſcience is obliged, and no further. As God alone knows the Conſcience, and has power to puniſh it, ſo he alone can bind it. I acknowledge that for Conſcience ſake we are bound to obey the juſt commands of Men that are in Authority over us: but the Obligation upon Conſcience to do this comes not from them, but from Gods command, that we *ſhould be*

(f) *Conſtat ſyntereſis latiore ſenſu partim ex principiis moralibus innatis cum eorum concluſionibus; & partim ex iis quæ Deus inſuper homini præſcripſit, ſed utramque partem conſtituit voluntas Dei revelata, quâ homo intelligit ſibi ſuum officium præſcriptum eſſe. Hinc lex Dei ſola obligat conſcientiam, per legem autem intelligimus voluntatem Dei revelatam ità ut contineat etiam illa quæ in Evangelio præſcribuntur.* Amaſl. 1. De Conſc. c. 2. p. 5.

Subject

Subject to them, and to be ready unto every good Work, Tit. 3. 1.

3. As Conſcience implies a knowledge of the will of God, *ſo 'tis the Office of Conſcience to impell us to comply with his will which is made known to us.* The Prophet ſpeaking concerning the Spirit bringing the Word to remembrance, tells the Children of *Iſrael*, *Iſa.* 30.21. *Thine Ears ſhall hear a word behind thee, ſaying, This is the way, walk in it when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.* Theſe words may very aptly be applied unto Conſcience, which is as a Voice within us, ſaying concerning forbidden paths, *Theſe are not the way*, and therefore turn out of them; but concerning commanded Duties, *Theſe are the way*, and therefore practiſe them. When *Joſeph* was ſollicited by his Miſtreſs to commit folly, and the temptation was ſtrong, conſidering the circumſtances which he was in, It was Conſcience that minded him of his Obligation to his Maſter, which he ought not to requite by defiling of his Bed; and eſpecially how evil and hainous ſuch a deed would be in the Lords eyes: and he comes to a fixed reſolution not to yield, not to go contrary to his Conſcience and Duty. *How* (ſays he) *ſhall I do this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt God?* Gen. 39.9. Conſcience is not onely a witneſs to teſtifie concerning us, nor onely a Judge to paſs Sentence upon us, but alſo a Law commanding and ſtirring us up unto our Duty, and when it does thus excite us to Obedience, Firſt, *it uſes Gods Name and Authority:* Secondly, *it charges under the greateſt penalties*: Thirdly, *it ſets before us the Lords great goodneſs.*

1. Conſcience to impell us to Obedience *uſes Gods own Name and Authority. Thus ſaith the Lord*, ſays

Conſcience: Theſe commands are the commands of God, they are enacted by Him who is the ſupream *Law-giver, who hath power to ſave and to deſtroy*, James 4. 12. The *Theſſalonians when they received the Word of God which they heard of the Apoſtles, they received it not as the word of Men, but as it is in Truth the word of God, which worketh effectually in them that believe*, 1 Theſ. 2. 13. Conſcience charged them to receive the Goſpel, becauſe the Goſpel of God; and they did receive it, though hereupon they were expoſed to never ſo great Afflictions and Tribulations. Conſcience looks beyond Inſtruments, which are but Earthen Veſſels, Men of like paſſions with our ſelves; and eyes that God who employs and ſends them. In the Publiſhing of a Proclamation, who ſays, *Thus ſaith the Town-Clerk*? No, every one concludes, *Thus ſaith the King*. This is really the will of God, ſays Conſcience, and therefore do not dare to be obſtinate againſt it. It uſes the ſame Language which the Apoſtle *Paul* does to *Timothy*, after it has urged unto Duty, and to take heed of ſin: *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall Judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom*, 2 Tim. 4. 1. Here is ſuch a Name and Authority uſed as may well make us to ſtand in awe.

2. Conſcience *charges us under the greateſt penalties*. It tells us indeed of temporal plagues, and Spiritual Judgments, and how much ſin may coſt us in this preſent World; but that's not all, nor the worſt of all; it alſo makes *Hell naked* before us, and takes off that *covering which is upon Deſtruction*, and bids us look down, and then asks this Queſtion, *How will you be able to dwell with devouring fire? How will you be able to inhabit everlaſting burnings?* Is it good, ſays Conſcience, to Live without God in this World, and

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with a curſe to depart for ever from him in the next? Isit good to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, and then to be tormented in thoſe Flames which never can be quenched? To run into ſin, is to ruſh into a Battel againſt that God, againſt whom none ever hardned themſelves and proſpered. To run into ſin is a mad venturing to leap into Hell; think of this when tempted. Oh how ſlender are the penalties wherewith Humane Laws are backed! Thoſe Statutes which were made by ſevere *Draco*, which are ſaid to be writ with Blood, becauſe he puniſhed every fault with Death; had not ſuch a dreadful penalty annexed to them, as the Laws of God: For what is the Death of the Body, if compared with the Damnation of the Body and Soul for ever? *Luke* 12. 4, 5.

3. Conſcience that it may perſwade us to Obedience, *ſets before us the Lords great goodneſs*; bids us *behold his goodneſs as well as his ſeverity*, Rom. 11. 22. It tells us, that if we depart from God, we forſake our own Mercies, we leave our Rock and Fortreſs, and betray our ſelves into the hands of Enemies. It uſes the cords of Love to draw us after God, as well as the Reins of fear to reſtrain us from ſin.

It brings Mercies to remembrance, all which (and oh how great is the Number of them!) are as ſo many Obligations to Obedience, and withal aſſures us that God is ſuch a Maſter, that if we follow him fully, we ſhall not want renewed and multiplied encouragements in his Service. What *Nathan* ſpake unto *David* after his ſin, Conſcience does ſpeak after the ſame manner before, to keep us within the bounds of our Duty. *God has delivered, he has loaded thee with benefits, and if theſe are too little, he is willing to give more*; and therefore leave him not, but cleave unto him.

All theſe ways does Conſcience take to move us to

do the will of God; and indeed eſpecially at ſome times its impulſes are very vehement and ſtrong; it fills its mouth with Arguments, and evidently lays before us the unreaſonableneſs and danger of ſin, and uſes a reſtleſs importunity to diſſwade us from it; and if Conſcience, notwithſtanding all this, be ſtifled; hereby we ſhall vaſtly increaſe our guilt, and our ſinning will become by far the greater provocation.

4. As 'tis the Office of Conſcience to impell us to comply with the will of God, *ſo alſo to bear Witneſs concerning our ſelves and Actions.* As it tells us what we ſhould do, ſo what we do it exactly obſerves. 'Tis very evident from Scripture, that this witneſs-bearing is a main part of the work of Conſcience, *Rom.* 9. 1. *I ſay the truth in Chriſt, I lye not, my Conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt.* So 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *the teſtimony of his Conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity he had had his converſation in the World.* Conſcience is ſuch a witneſs as is more than a thouſand other witneſſes, for 'tis privy to all we do; it will many times cry out againſt us when others flatter us. (*g*) And if it teſtifies good concerning us, it will not be controuled by mens cenſures, nor by Afflictions, which are ſeeming tokens of Gods Anger. *Job*'s burthen was very heavy, his griefs and calamities were more weighty than the Sand, ſo that his words were ſwallowed up. His Friends charge him with Hypocriſie, and yet Conſcience witneſſing for him does prevail, *Job* 27. 5. *Till I dye I will not*

(*g*) *Magna vis eſt Conſcientiæ Judicis, & magna in utramque partem; ut neque timeant qui nihil commiſerint; & pœnam ſemper ante oculos verſari putent qui peccârint.* Cicero, Orat. pro T. An. Milone, pag. 553.

remove

remove my integrity from me, and his Heart wineſſing to his Righteouſneſſe and ſincerity he goes higher, *Job.* 16, 12. *Alſo now behold my witneſs is in Heaven, and my Record is on High.* Three things are implied in this witneſſing of Conſcience.

1. *A recollection of what we have done.* It has a notable faculty in running back upon the footſteps which we have taken. (*h*) The old Engliſh word for Conſcience was *In-wit*, becauſe it knows whatever is within us, whatever is done by us. Thoſe which we read of, *Jer.* 8. 6. who when God hearkned and heard, did not ſpeak aright, did not ſay *What have we done?* 'tis a ſign their Hearts were hardned, and their Conſciences for the preſent caſt into a dead ſleep. But here I muſt ſay that Conſcience, though aſleep is like *Noah*, who knew what his younger Son had done to him, and how he had looked upon his nakedneſſe when he was aſleep. Conſcience when it wakes will underſtand all that was done before; and the ſooner it begins to reflect, the better will it diſcharge its duty.

2. This witneſſing of Conſcience implies *a comparing of what we have done with that rule which God has preſcribed us.* What was feigned concerning *Janus* that ancient King of *Italy*, that he had two faces, may truly be affirmed concerning Conſcience; with one face it looks forward towards the VVord which is the rule of Righteouſneſs, and with the other it looks backwards towards our ſelves, and then inquires whether there be that purity and uprightneſs of Heart, and that living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, which the VVord does ſo expreſly call for.

(h) *Cambdens Remains*, pag. 26.

3. The

3. The witneſſing of Conſcience implies *its bringing in evidence pro or con, for or againſt us*, according as we have, or have not taken heed to that *rule, which whoſoever walks according to, Peace and Mercy ſhall be upon them*, *Gal.* 6. 16. The witneſſe of Conſcience is an accuſation upon doing Evil, but an apology upon doing well.

1. This witneſſe of Conſcience is *an accuſation upon doing Evil.* Conſcience does charge the ſoul with guilt and this is a very heavy charge, where ſinners are not without, or paſt feeling. The Conſcience of *David* when *Nathan* came to him, preſently ſeconded *Nathan.* The Prophet accuſed him, *Thou art the Man*, his Conſcience alſo ſides with the Prophet, and he accuſes himſelf: *I have ſinned againſt the Lord*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. An accuſing Conſcience made *David* ſo ſenſible of his need of mercy, and ſo earneſt that he might obtain it; the ſight of his ſins cauſed moſt deep dejection of ſpirit. The thirty eight pſalm is called a *Pſalm of David to bring to remembrance.* His conſcience was buſie in reflecting and accuſing when he wrote it; and how does he complain, *v.* 3! *There is not any reſt in my bones becauſe of my ſin, for mine iniquities are gone over my head as an heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long*, v. 4. 6.

There are ſix things to be obſerved concerning the accuſations of Conſcience.

1. Conſcience accuſes *undeniably*, it does not charge the ſinner upon hear-ſay, or upon ſurmiſe, but upon its own knowledge; *I accuſe of nothing*, ſayes Conſcience, *but what I ſaw done with my own eyes, and when I ſaw it I wrote it down, with all the aggravating circumſtances of it in my own Book of remembrance, and here you may find it regiſtred.* You may as well deny

deny that you see at all, when you see most plainly, as deny Consciences accusing testimony. We find therefore in Scripture, that when Conscience has brought to remembrance sins committed a great while before, its testimony even then could not be denyed. *Josephs* Brethren many years after their cruelty towards their Brother, cry out *We are Verily guilty*: Conscience accused, and they could not deny it. *Job's* Conscience told him of the sins of his youth, when he was grown up to riper years, and he acknowledges them, *Job.* 13. 26. *For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possesse the iniquities of my Youth.*

2. Conscience accuses *boldly*, as 'tis said of Death, that it comes as easily to the Princes Palace, as the Beggars Cottage; so it may be affirmed concerning conscience, 'twill come and speak as plainly to the highest, as to the meanest. 'Tis not προσωπολήπτης a respecter of persons: Conscience has no more reason to fear the greatest, than the poorest. Can the greatest man punish his Conscience for being plain with him? He may indeed wound it more and more, but this will in the end onely increase his own smart and anguish. Prophets and Ministers have not accesse unto some, nor an opportunity to tell them of their misdoings, and if they have, and do discharge their duty, they may suffer for it. *John the Baptist* was sent to Prison for reproving *Herod*, and afterwards his life was taken away: But though *Herod* was no more troubled and rebuked by *John*, yet his own Conscience does fearlesly and impartially deal with him, and therefore when he heard of the fame of *Jesus*, he cries out *John is risen from the Dead*; which shews that his Conscience flew in his face about him.

3. Conscience accuses *of high matters, of such crimes the least of which deserves damnation.* There is nothing

thing which Conſcience does accuſe of but ſin, and ſin is the Tranſgreſſion of a Law, and that Law is the Law of God, and this God is an infinite Majeſty, and therefore ſin does merit an infinite puniſhment. Though Papiſts call ſome ſins venial, and make but light of them; yet a ſerious Conſcience looks upon every ſin as juſtly deſerving Eternal condemnation: the Apoſtle ſpeaks indefinitely concerning ſin, without excepting any. *The Wages of Sin is Death, Rom. 6. ult.* and by Death he means Eternal Death, for 'tis oppoſed unto the gift of God, which is Eternal Life by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Among Men there are indeed ſome petty faults, which a Malefactor is not ſo afraid when accuſed of; but how pale does he look, when Felony, or Murther, or Treaſon is laid to his charge, alas the Gallows, the Gibbet, Hanging, Drawing, Quartering; he now fears. Conſcience brings in an indictement againſt the ſinner for nothing but what is damnable, for every ſin againſt the great God, is ſo; in its own Nature. And if every ſin makes the Soul liable to the vengeance of Eternal fire, how may the ſinner be amazed when all his iniquities are ſet in order before him!

4. Conſcience accuſes *a man to himſelf.* *Luther* tells us concerning a certain Cardinal that was wont to ſay. *Conſcientia eſt mala beſtia quæ facit hominem ſtare contra ſeipſum.* Conſcience is an evil Beaſt, for it makes a man to ſtand againſt himſelf. When Conſcience is our accuſer, our accuſer is within us, and we can go no where without this accuſer. A man by this means becomes Ἑαυτοντιμωρούμενος a ſelf-puniſher. Theſe ſelf-accuſations do break a mans ſpirit, they imbitter all Temporal comforts, and Oh! how bitter then do they make affliction?

5. Conſcience in its accuſations *lets us underſtand,*

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that God underſtands better then it ſelf what it layes to our charge. The Apoſtle tells us, that *God is greater than our Hearts, and knows all things,* 1 *John* 3 20. This Text plainly informs us that God knows by us more than we know. Many ſins ſlip out of Our memories, but none out of Gods. *Hoſ.* 7. 2. *They conſider not in their Hearts that I remember all their wickedneſs, now their own doings have beſet them round, they are all before my face.* When Conſcience is awakened, and we are beſet round with our own doings, this cauſes the perplexity, that they are all before Gods face, he remembers all, though we are not able to number half of them. *Moſes* cryes out, *We are conſumed by thine anger, by thy wrath are we troubled, Thou haſt ſet our inquities before thee, our ſecret ſins in the light of thy Countenance, Pſal.* 90. 7. 8.

6. Conſcience is many times *inceſſant, and not to be ſilenced in its accuſations. Auguſtine* (h) compares a clamorous Conſcience to a brawling Woman, whoſe Tongue being ſet on fire of Hell, never lies ſtill but is continually ſhooting forth bitter words. Now *Solomon* tells us, *'Tis better to dwell in the corner of a houſe top than with ſuch a Woman in a wide houſe, Prov.* 25. 24. nay, *'Tis better to dwell in the Wilderneſs*

(h) *Qui malas habent uxores domus ſuas intrare nolunt, ad forum exeunt & gaudent; cœpit hora eſſe quâ intraturi ſunt ad domum ſuam & contriſtantur. Intraturi ſunt ad tædia, ad murmura, ad amaritudines, ad everſiones. Si ergo miſeri ſunt, qui cùm redeunt ad parietes ſuos timent; quantò miſeriores, qui ad conſcientiam redire nolunt, ne litibus peccatorum evertantur? Ut poſſis libens redire ad cor tuum, illud munda. Auſer cupiditatem, ſordes; auſer labem avaritiæ, malas cogitationes, odia, non dico adverſus amicum, ſed etiam adverſus inimicum; auſer iſta omnia Intra cor tuum, & gaudebis* Aug in. *Enarrat.* in Pſal. 33. pag. (*mihi*) 237, 238.

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than with a contentious and angry Woman, Prov. 21. 19. But how much more intolerable are the reproaches of an enraged Conſcience! Flaſhes of Hell fire do iſſue as it were out of the mouth of it, it is continually bringing guilt unto remembrance, and ſpeaking of thoſe Flames unto which this guilt does render the Soul that ſins, obnoxious and liable.

Thus the witneſs of Conſcience is an accuſation upon doing evil, and ſuch an accuſation as may very much be dreaded.

2. The witneſſe of Conſcience *is an Apology upon doing well.* It will bear witneſſe for thoſe that are ſincere, when they walk before God in Truth and with a perfect Heart. It muſt indeed be granted *that in many things all* (even the very beſt) *do offend, Jam.* 3. 2. But conſcience takes notice of the bent and deſire of the Soul to pleaſe the Lord, and how burthenſome and bewailed infirmities are. Conſcience will excuſe and defend if there be a *will to do good, though evil at the ſame time be preſent*; as it was with the Apoſtle himſelf. *Rom.* 7. 21. Conſcience having looked into the Goſpel, underſtands, that God does not deal with Believers, according to the terms of the Covenant of Works, which had a promiſe of Life only upon condition of perfect obedience, but Death was threatned upon the leaſt tranſgreſſion. No, no, they are not now under the Law, but under Grace, and in the new Covenant, ſincerity is accounted and accepted as our perfection before God, through Chriſt Jeſus. Now Conſciences excuſing or defending is of great force and weight. 'Tis not to be checkt by the reproaches of men, nor by the accuſer of the Brethren.

1. Conſcience *excuſing us is not to be checkt by the reproaches of Men.* How (eager as I hinted before) were *Jobs* friends in their cenſures and accuſations!

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They thought his Religion was but a meer ſhew, and that he had uſed the Form of Godlineſs onely as a cover for his wickedneſs and injuſtice. Heark how he ſpeaks to them, *Job* 19. 2, 3. *How long will ye vex my Soul, and break me in pieces with words? theſe ten times have ye reproached me, you are not aſhamed that you make your ſelves ſtrange unto me*; and yet notwithſtanding all, as long as his Conſcience did clear him, his confidence is not ſhaken; and he ſays, *the Righteous* (ſurely including himſelf) *ſhall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands ſhall wax ſtronger and ſtronger*, Job 17. 9.

2. Conſciences *excuſing us, is not to be checkt by Satan the Accuſer of the Brethren.* As *Job*'s Friends did cenſure him, ſo Satan accuſed him of Mercenarineſs and ſelfiſhneſs in his Religion: *Doth* Job *fear God for nought? But put forth thy hand now, and touch what he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy Face.* Theſe were the words of Satan, *Job* 1. 9. 11. But inſtead of this, when all was taken away, *Job* bleſſes the Lord; nay, when his Bone and Fleſh were touched, he ſays, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil?* Job 2. 10. *Job*'s ſincerity is proved, and approved, is evident to himſelf; and Satan, who 'tis likely enough was buſie to diſturb him, is demonſtrated to be a Lyar.

As the Devil does hide the faults of the profane and ſecure from their eyes, ſo he is continually objecting to the ſincere their failings and imperfections: by his good will he would have us ſee no ſin at all, or nothing elſe but ſin; and from the remainders of Corruption, he is bold to call the Saints Hypocrites, though theſe remainders are never ſo much their burthen. But if Conſcience does give teſtimony, that *they delight in the Law of God after the inward Man*, and that *the evil*

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in themſelves, they hate, and deſire to be *delivered from the Body of ſin and Death:* Notwithſtanding Satan's ſlanders, they *give thanks to God becauſe there is now no condemnation to them, being in Chriſt Jeſus,* Rom. 7. *latter end,* compared with *Rom.* 8. *the beginning.* So much for this Office of Conſcience, which is bearing witneſs, both by way of Accuſing and Excuſing.

5. It follows in the Definition, that 'tis *the Office of Conſcience to Judge, that is, to acquit, or to condemn us.* Judging lies in theſe two things, in abſolving and condemning. The Judge, if Righteous, does acquit the Innocent, does condemn the guilty. Now, condemning and not condemning, or abſolving, are both aſcribed unto Conſcience, by the Apoſtle, 1 *John* 3. 20, 21. *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things; beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.* There is a kind of a Tribunal erected in the Soul of Man, and after Conſcience has brought in Evidence, and Acted the part of a Witneſs, then it Acts the part of a Judge, and paſſes Sentence, which is two-fold: A Sentence of Abſolution, a Sentence of Condemnation.

1. Conſcience as a Judge *paſſes a Sentence of Abſolution*; and, if being rightly informed, Conſcience grounds its Sentence upon Scripture, we may conclude that what *it looſes on Earth is looſed in Heaven.* When Conſcience does declare to the true believer, that he is *juſtified by his Faith, and has Peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; it ſays no more than what God himſelf has plainly ſpoken, *Rom.* 5. 1. When it declares unto humbled and penitent Souls, who are humbled becauſe they have ſinned and perverted that which is

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right, and ſee that it has not profited them; and who alſo confeſs, and are willing to forſake their Iniquities: when it declares unto ſuch, *that Mercy and abundant Pardon belongs to them*; truly there is plain and ſufficient warrant from Scripture for this Declaration. To be abſolved in the Court of Conſcience is matter of great conſolation, and if Conſcience draw its concluſions from Scripture-premiſes, it may be called παράκλησις ἰσχυρά, *ſtrong conſolation*, ſuch as has a firm baſis and Foundation.

When Conſcience does abſolve, much is contained in this Sentence; it pronounces us free from puniſhment, and alſo ſentences a reward unto us; it ſhuts Hell, and opens Heaven: for a reward, and the greateſt that can be conceived, (nay, how great cannot be at preſent conceived) is *ſurely* though *freely* promiſed unto them that are ſincere Believers. 'Tis indeed a *reward of Grace, not of Debt*; but becauſe of Grace, therefore the more ſure, *Rom.* 4. 16. *Therefore it is of Faith that it might be by Grace, to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the Seed.* Conſcience in Judging does Act as Gods Vice-gerent: He himſelf will Judge at laſt as it (if it have light and purity) does Judge at preſent. And thoſe who are now acquitted in the Court of Conſcience, ſhall be alſo abſolved at the great Tribunal. The Apoſtle having ſaid, *We have known and believed the Love that God hath to us*, preſently ſpeaks *concerning boldneſs in the day of Judgment*, 1 John 4. 16, 17.

2. Conſcience, as a Judge, *paſſes a Sentence of Condemnation*, (*i*) and this Sentence is paſſed upon the

(*i*) *Exemplo quodcunque malo committitur ipſi,*
Diſplicet auctori: prima eſt hæc ultio quod ſe,
Judice, nemo nocens abſolvitur.
Juvenal. *Satyr.* 13.

Impenitent, the Hypocrites, and the Unbelievers; and becauſe the Scripture does condemn theſe, we may truly ſay, that *what Conſcience binds on Earth is bound in Heaven.* I grant indeed, that if Conſcience ſhould paſs Sentence according to the Law of works, every Child of *Adam* (the Holy Child Jeſus excepted) would be condemned. Hark what that Man after Gods own heart ſaid, *Pſal.* 130. 3. *If thou Lord ſhouldſt mark Iniquity, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand?* And *Pſal.* 143. 2. *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.* His Conſcience ſaw ſo much (and God ſaw a great deal more) of ſin, that in ſtrictneſs of Law and Juſtice it told him he was a condemned Man. But by the Law of Grace they who turn from ſin, and believe in Chriſt, are acquitted. But as for thoſe *who will not come to Chriſt that they may have Life*, but preferr their fleſhly and worldly Luſts, and thoſe things wherewith theſe luſts are gratified, before the Lord of Life and Glory; as they are condemned by the Law of Works, ſo likewiſe by the Law of Grace: Conſcience therefore doing its Office, paſſes a dreadful Sentence upon them, and tells them, *that the wrath of God abides on them*, John 3. *ult.*

But here 'twill be needful to note a difference between Conſciences condemning a ſinner now, and the Lords condemning him hereafter: that Sentence which Chriſt will pronounce at the laſt day, will be peremptory, unalterable; therefore that Judgment is called *Eternal Judgment*, Heb. 6. 2. There is no appeal from that Tribunal, no reverſing of the Sentence; but thoſe that are then condemned, *Go they muſt, and that immediately into everlaſting puniſhment*; as *the Righteous*, on the other hand, *into Life Eternal*, Mat. 25. *ult.* But when Conſcience does at preſent condemn a ſin-

ſinner, it does not preclude and ſhut up the door of hope againſt him; its Sentence of condemnation is but conditional, in caſe of continuance and obſtinacy in ſin. But if the unbeliever will believe in Jeſus, and the impenitent will mourn for their Iniquities, and turn from them to God, then they ſhall no longer be under condemnation; but *as ſin hath Reigned unto Death, ſo ſhall Grace Reign through Righteouſneſs unto eternal Life by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, Rom. 5. 21.

I have told you how the Office of Conſcience is to Judge, that is, to acquit or condemn. Now, there are four things that come under this Judgment of Conſcience. Our Actions, our Communication, our Thoughts and Affections, our Eſtate to God-ward.

1. Conſcience *judges of our Actions and Converſation*; and if our Converſation be ſuch as becomes the Goſpel, if we ſhine as lights in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Generation, then it ſays, *Well done*. But if we profeſs to know God, and in Works deny him, being abominable and diſobedient, and to every good work Reprobate; Conſcience condemns ſuch doings, and ſays many times in plain terms, that our profeſſion is but meer Mockery.

2. Conſcience *judges of our Communication*; though words are commonly called wind, yet Conſcience does not make light of them. It does approve of Holy and Edifying Diſcourſe; when out of the abundance of the Word of God in the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh that which is good, and which may adminiſter grace unto the hearers. *For when they that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another, the Lord hearkned and heard it; and a Book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name*, Mal. 3. 16. But Conſcience does condemn corrupt communication, eſpecially where the Tongue

ſhews it ſelf an unruly evil full of deadly poyſon, by that filthy talking, lying, ſwearing, curſing, back-biting, which proceed out of the mouth. And it does not ſtick to ſay, *The Tongue being not bridled, all Religion is but vain*, James 1. 27.

3. Conſcience *judges of our Thoughts and Affections*; theſe as they ought to be agreeable to Rule, ſo they come under cenſure. The Law is ſo large, that it reaches to our very Thoughts. The wicked man is to forſake *his thoughts* as well as ways, elſe he cannot be a ſincere Convert, nor obtain Mercy, *Iſa.* 55. 7. Conſcience here is very prying, becauſe theſe internal Acts, theſe thoughts, and deſires, and deſigns, do very much diſcover what the heart is. If wicked thoughts, which are all vain and unprofitable, and likewiſe hurtful, are ſuffered to lodge in the heart, and are delightful and welcome Gueſts to it, 'tis a ſign the heart is unrenewed: but if theſe thoughts when they ariſe in the heart, are a burthen, are conflicted with, and help is implored againſt them, that God himſelf would ſhew his power, and bring them into Captivity; this ſpeaks the heart ſanctified. If there be a will and deſire in the heart to ſin, though want of Opportunity, or fear of Diſgrace hinder the Act, Conſcience will condemn this as a tranſgreſſion of the Law, which does require inward Rectitude, as well as outward Righteouſneſs. And on the other hand, if there be a ſincere deſire and purpoſe to obey the Lord, Conſcience judges this to be Obedience, becauſe God is pleaſed to account it ſo. *Abraham* is ſaid by Faith to have Offered up his Son *Iſaac*; nay, 'tis twice ſaid, that he Offered him up, *Heb.* 11. 17. when he onely had a purpoſe to have done it.

4. Conſcience does *judge concerning our State to God-ward*; Whether we are or are not reconciled to him.

him. If we Live and walk after the Fleſh, if our main care is to provide for the Fleſh, and we account it our greateſt happineſs to fulfill the luſts of it, and we are reſolved to pleaſe our Fleſh, though God be never ſo much Angred; truly Conſcience may then judge our ſtate to be bad. But if we walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit, if our hearts are renewed by the Spirit, and in our lives we are led by him, then Conſcience may judge *us to be in Chriſt, and that there is therefore no condemnation to us*, Rom. 8. 1.

I muſt here Obſerve, that Conſcience may condemn a particular Act, when the Eſtate is not condemned. *David*'s carriage towards *Uriah* was very foul, yet his ſtate was not altered from Grace to Nature: *Aſa* his truſting in an Arm of Fleſh, and impriſoning the Prophet that rebuked him, were Acts to be condemned, yet his State was good, and 'tis ſaid of him, that his heart was perfect with God all his days, 2 *Chron.* 15. 17. compared with *Chap.* 16. 2, 3. 10. But if the ſtate be bad, all particular Acts muſt needs be bad alſo: If the Tree be corrupt, the Fruit will be like it; for though Conſcience may approve of ſome thing done by a man in a Natural ſtate, as being good for the Matter of it, yet if it Judge aright, it muſt condemn it as evil, in regard of the Manner.

Thus have I at large explained the Definition which I gave of Conſcience, *That it is a Power of the Soul in Man, whereby we underſtanding the will of God, are impelled to comply with it, and do bear witneſs concerning our ſelves and Actions, and accordingly Judge, that is, acquit or condemn our ſelves.*

In the third place, I am to aſſign the Reaſons why the Lord has given unto Man a Conſcience. The Reaſons are three.

1. Conscience is given unto Man *that it may be a remembrancer, to put him in mind of God.* To remember God is mans great Duty, he cannot begin too soon to do this; therefore, says *Solomon, Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy Youth*, Eccles. 12. 1. and after we have begun, we must hold on; for there can never be any good reason why the Lord should be forgotten. How many Millions of things are there which are appointed to put us in mind of God? *The invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head*, Rom. 1. 20. The Sun, the Moon, and all those thousands of shining Stars that our Eyes behold in the Firmament; the Fowls that fly in the Air, the Beasts of the Earth, the great Sea and the Creatures that pass through the paths of it; the Trees, the Plants and Flowers that grow in the Field, are all as so many remembrancers to bring God to the thoughts of the Children of Men; so that they are without excuse if they forget him.

But besides all these, there is a Monitor within, something in their own Breasts, and that's Conscience, which will be telling them of God, which will be telling them of his Power and Presence; and that which Conscience does inferr from hence, is this; *Let all the Earth fear the Lord, let all the Inhabitants of the World stand in awe of him*, Psal. 33. 8. Conscience does Comment upon the Creatures; How glorious is that God who made all these! and he that made can also destroy: and therefore his Anger is to be dreaded. He Rules and Governs the World; *He forms the Light, and creates Darkness; he makes Peace, and creates Evil*; and therefore surely 'tis wisdom to please him, and the height of madness to provoke him.

2. Conscience is given to Man, *that it may put him*

in mind of his own great Intereſt and concern, which is to ſecure his Soul, and to provide for Eternity. 'Tis not without reaſon that the Natural Man is called *fleſh* in Scripture, *Gen.* 6. 3. The fleſh does ſo prevail againſt the Soul, as to take up his whole time and care. His great enquiries are, *What ſhall I eat? what ſhall I drink? and wherewithall ſhall I be cloathed?* Mat. 6. 31. And thus he would live, as if he had no Soul to ſave or loſe, if Conſcience did not put him in mind of that precious Jewel which he is intruſted with, and bring to his remembrance that of our Lord Jeſus, *Mat.* 16.26. *What is a Man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* Conſcience tells us of a Soul which is of greateſt value, and which is in greateſt danger. It calls a Man a Fool for ſaying, *Soul, take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry, thou haſt Goods laid up for many Years.* Sumptuous Fare cannot ſatisfie the Souls hunger, the moſt delicious Wines cannot quench the Souls thirſt; nor purple and fine Linnen cover the Souls Nakedneſs. Theſe things onely gratifie the ſenſes, but ſome thing that's higher, and more durable muſt be lookt after, that may be a proper and ſutable good unto the Soul of Man, which is of a Spiritual and Immortal Nature; and if you ask what that is? I Anſwer, the Eternal and All-ſufficient God. (*k*)

3. Conſcience is given to Man, *that it may tell him of his Duty, and urge him to the performance of it.* Such is the corruption of Mans Nature, *that he hates Inſtruction, and is apt to caſt the Law of God behind his*

(*k*) *Magnus es Domine, & laudabilis valde, magna virtus tua, & ſapientiæ tuæ non eſt numerus. Tu excitas ut laudare te deleſtet; quia feciſti nos ad te, & inquietum eſt cor noſtrum donec requieſcet in te. Auguſtin.* Confeſ. l. 1. c. 1.

back, *Psal.* 50. 17. but *Conscience* observes what that Law requires, and sayes 'tis Holy, just and good, and therefore does protest against the Transgressing of it. *Conscience* tells us that God is a better master than sin and Satan; He rewards his Servants with Life and Joy, but They theirs with Eternal Death and VVoe. The Apostle speaks of all men, even the Heathens, that there is ἔργον νόμου γεγραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν; *The work of the Law written in their Hearts*, *Rom.* 2. 15. The *Consciences* of Men are the Tables where the Laws of God are written, and *Conscience* is continually opening these Tables, and commanding men to read and do their duty. I grant indeed that there is a *writing of the Law in the Heart*, which is promised in the new Covenant, which all men have not, but is peculiar to Believers, and when this promise is made good to any, not only are their minds enlightned but their hearts changed; there is a sutableness between their renewed wills, and the Laws of God, so that now they are desirous to keep them, as before they were violently bent to break them. But the writing of the Law in the *Conscience* is commune, and *Conscience* understands this Law that it may presse obedience to it.

4. Conscience is given to man *that it may warn and caution him against the Tempter*. It is as it were the Watchman which gives notice of this Enemies approach. Of all the powers of the Soul the Devil does least like this, for it does most withstand him. When Satan promises great matters to those whom he tempts, Conscience sayes that a Lyar is not to be believed. Either he will not give what he promises, or if he does, what he gives had better not be given, because 'tis given to the sinners hurt. Ἐχθρῶν δῶρα δῶρα, the gifts of Enemies are no gifts at all, or worse then none.

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When Satan pretends to aim never ſo much at our advantage, or advancement, or delight, Conſcience ſees the Snake in the Graſs, and tells, that the Devil is a Murtherer, and in every temptation is carrying on a murtherous deſign againſt us. When Satan comes with the ſweet cup of ſinful pleaſures, Conſcience ſayes, *Drink not, for there is rank poyſon in it.* When Satan transforms himſelf into a Friend, and ſeems to conſult our ſafety, and eaſe, and gain, Conſcience cryes out, *Take heed, a Murtherer is neer you,* and therefore yield not to him, give him no admiſſion.

5. Conſcience is given unto Man *that it may give Teſtimony to the Word of God, and ſide with it againſt all carnal reaſonings & Affections.* Our Lord Jeſus had to do with Hearers which were captious, which were ſtill ready to ſtart their frivolous objections againſt himſelf, and againſt his Doctrine, as when he ſaid, *if I be lifted up from the Earth,* that is Crucified, *I will draw all men to me*; they preſently object, *Chriſt abideth for ever, and how then can he be lifted up? Joh.* 12. 32. 34. Now he does not anſwer directly to their objection, but applies himſelf to their Conſciences, and tells them, 'twas but *a little while that the light was to be with them,* and therefore ſays he, *Walk while ye have the Light, leſt Darkneſs come upon you; for he that walketh in Darkneſs knoweth not whither he goeth, v.* 35. So the Apoſtle did *commend himſelf to every mans Conſcience in the ſight of God*; and adds, *if our Goſpel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are loſt,* 2 Cor. 4. 2, 3. Conſcience is more ready to cloſe with Truth; the Affections hang off becauſe Truth does thwart them while they remain carnal. The Conſciences of the Jewes, many of them, were convinced that Jeſus Chriſt was the true *Meſſiah,* but their Hearts were againſt following of him, *for they loved*

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the Praise of men more than the Praise God, Joh. 12. 42, 43. When a corrupt will sayes concerning a precept, This is an hard saying, 'tis too strict: *Conscience* will confesse, 'tis just and good to be obeyed. When a carnal mind phansies absurdities (*l*) in the mysteries of the Gospel, and says, *how can these things be? Conscience* is modest, and replies, that God is True, and mans understanding is shallow, and therefore man is to believe what God speaks, for certain, though he cannot fully comprehend it.

6. *Conscience* is given unto man, *that this may side with the Lord when he passes Judgment at the great approaching day.* This day is called a day *of the Revelation of his Righteous judgement*, and whatever punishments he does sentence the Sons of Men unto, they will not be able to charge him with the least injustice. Their own *Consciences* will acknowledge every crime that the Lord then shall lay to their charge; and when they are thrown down into that Lake which burns with Fire and Brimstone, *Conscience* will be ready to speak the same language which you read, *Rev.* 16. 5. 7. *Thou art Righteous O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast thus judged. Even so Lord God Almighty, True and Righteous are thy judgments.* (*m*) God will be justified when he speaks, and cleer when he judges: and sinners *Consciences* will cleer him fully, and will acknowledge that his wayes are equal, but theirs have been unequal. Every mouth

(*l*) *Prodigiosus certe humani ingenii furor, quod injustitiæ potius Deum insimulat, quam ut se coarguat cæcitatis.* Calv. in Epist. ad Rom. c. 9. v. 14.

(*m*) *Si rem Conscientiâ suâ premitur silet ac tacitus expectat suam damnationem, suo jam silentio damnatus.* Calv. in Epist. ad Rom. c. 3. v. 19.

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will then be ſtopped and the guilty will have nothing to object againſt their Judges proceedings.

I come in the laſt place to the Application.

Uſe. 1. Shall be of information: ſeveral weighty Truths may be inferred from this Doctrine.

1. If there be a *Conſcience* in Man, learn from hence, *that there is a God.* There are many arguments to prove this great fundamental Truth: the Creatures would never have had a Being unleſs God had given a Being to them. (*n*) His works do abundantly declare both his Being and his Glory. But if we look into our ſelves, we ſhall find this Truth written plain upon our own ſouls. We are (as I ſaid before) ſo full of ſelf-love, that we ſhould not at all regard our own knowledge of our miſdoings, if Conſcience were not convinced of the Godhead, whoſe judgement we cannot poſſibly eſcape. The Pſalmiſt indeed tells us that *the fool hath ſaid in his Heart there is no God, Pſal.* 14. 1. but in this he rather ſpeaks what his wiſhes are, than what he is really perſwaded of. For it has been obſerved concerning thoſe who have been moſt Atheiſtical, that *Conſcience* has prickt and terrified them ſometimes; and the dread of God has (when they have heard it Thunder, or have been in ſome great calamity,) returned upon them.

2. If there be a *Conſcience* in Man, learn *that God is omniſcient.* If the Lord did confine himſelf to Heaven, and there enjoying his own bleſſedneſſe did not at all take notice what is done here below, we ſhould ſin ſecurely, and not be troubled that we have a Con-

(n) If ever there had been altogether nothing, there never could have been any thing.

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ſcience perpetually obſerving us: But therefore *Conſciences* eye is regarded becauſe God looks on as well as *Conſcience*. Our Hearts know much by us, but God is greater then our Hearts and knowes all things. *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord? do not I fill Heaven and Earth, ſaith the Lord?* ſurely it concerns us to walk circumſpectly and exactly, ſince *there is not any Creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight, but all things are open and naked unto the eyes of that God with whom we have to do, Heb.* 4. 13.

3. If there be a *Conſcience* in Man, learn *that God is Holy and Righteous.* Therefore *Conſcience* ſpeaks ſo much againſt ſin, and reproaches after the commiſſion of it, becauſe 'tis contrary to Gods holy Nature, and his Juſtice has a ſword to be revenged upon the ſinner. Secure Tranſgreſſors are apt to imagine God *altogether ſuch an One as themſelves*; but *Conſcience* when it awakes tells them that this imagination is groundleſs; that he is Glorious in Holineſs, *that he is not a God who hath pleaſure in wickedneſs, neither ſhall evil dwell with him, the fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in his ſight, he hateth all the workers of iniquity, Pſal.* 5. 4. 5.

4. If there be a *Conſcience* in Man, learn that *God is Great and Mighty, and that 'tis a fearful thing to fall into his hands.* 'Tis the conſideration of his irreſiſtible ſtrength, and the power of his Anger which puts *Conſcience* into ſuch horrour after the commiſſion of Wickedneſs. Heark what the Prophet ſpeaks, *Nah.* 1. 5, 6. *The Mountains quake at him, and the Hills melt, and the Earth is burnt at his preſence; yea the World and all that dwell therein; who can ſtand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceneſſe of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and*

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the Rocks are thrown down by him. The impreſſions of this anger muſt needs be terrible, therefore *Conſcience* cauſes ſuch perplexity, therefore the wounds of the Spirit are ſo intolerable, becauſe 'tis the hand of a great angry God that makes theſe wounds.

5. If there be a *Conſcience* in Man, learn *that God is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him, Heb.* 11.6. this is the ground and foundation that *Conſcience* has to ſhew for that encouragement which it gives unto well-doing. *Conſcience* could not ſet Curſing and Death before us, if God were not righteous and juſt: neither could it ſet Bleſſing and Life before us, if he were not good and gracious. 'Tis well for us that there is Mercy and forgiveneſs with the Lord, and that with him there is plenteous Redemption, elſe no *Conſcience* could have any peace, but every ſinner, unleſs ſtrangely ſtupid, would be overwhelmed with trouble and ſorrow.

6. If there be a *Conſcience* in man, learn from hence *the Immortality of the Soul*: (o) Beaſts who dye for good and all, and whoſe all dies together, have no Conſcience to diſquiet them. Man has a Conſcience, therefore his Soul dies not. 'Tis evident by the light of Nature that the Soul is immortal. Many of the Heathens dreaded ſin upon this account, leſt their Souls after death ſhould be puniſht for it. But in the Scripture this Truth is evidently delivered. Chriſt ſays, *Man cannot kill the Soul, though he can kill the Body, Mat.* 10. 28. But if the ſoul did dye or ſleep with the Body, then Man would be able to do the one as well

(o) *Morte carent animæ ſemperque priore relictâ,*
Sede novis domibus habitant vivuntque receptæ.
Ovid Metam. l. 15.

as the other; nay, he could not kill the Body but he must needs kill the Soul at the same time. Besides, the Apostle sayes, *we are willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 8. Now what of *Paul* but his Soul could be absent from his body, and present with the Lord? The Soul then is certainly immortal. How many awakened Consciences upon death-beds have dreaded the Souls immediate punishment! how many Saints upon death-beds have been ravished with the assured hopes of their Souls being presently with Christ upon their dissolution!

7. If there be a Conscience in a Man, learn *The certainty of a judgement to come.* The comming of the Lord to judgment Conscience is frequently bringing to our thoughts; I judge you sayes, Conscience at present; but One greater, infinitely greater then I, will judge you hereafter: all must stand before his bar. Hark what *Solomon* sayes, *Eccles.* 12. 13, 14. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his Commandements, for this is the whole of man; for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.* When *Paul* reasoned of Righteousnesse, Temperance and Judgment to come, *Felix* trembled, for his Conscience was convinced, his Conscience judged him, and condemned him as guilty of unrighteousnesse, and he fears that God would much more condemn him.

8. Is there a Conscience in Man, learn *what 'tis that lays some restraint upon the lusts of Men*, and hinders them from running into such excess of Riot as Nature would incline them to. When once sinners get victory over their Consciences, and *become past feeling, then they give themselves over to Lasciviousnesse, to work all Wickednesse and Uncleanness with greediness.*

Eph.

Eph. 4. 19. If there were no ſuch thing as Conſcience among the Sons of Men, though the World is very bad, yet it would be ten thouſand times worſe than 'tis. Earth would be more a-kin to Hell, though 'tis too much, too near a-kin already.

Uſe II. Be excited *to bleſs the Lord that he has given unto man ſuch a Power as Conſcience.* (p) Alas! we know not how to value Priviledges: the Word of God is an ineſtimable bleſſing, but who is thankful for it? Nay, moſt had rather be without it. Conſcience alſo is of admirable Uſe, but moſt are troubled at it, as if 'twere a thing ſent on purpoſe to torment them before the time. But by ſeveral Arguments I ſhall make it evident, that you have great cauſe to be thankful, that God has placed Conſciences in you.

1. Conſcience is ſuch a Power *as ſcaped but in mans fall of any other Faculty.* The will of Man is full of enmity againſt God, and therefore his heart is ſaid to *be deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* Jer. 17. 9. But though there is no good or rectitude in the heart, yet there is ſome Light remaining in the Conſcience, and though the heart be extreamly evil, willing to deceive, willing to be deceived, yet the Conſcience has ſome kind of tenderneſs and faithfulneſs left in it, unleſs by long cuſtome in ſin it be made ſenſeleſs and ſtupid. I readily yield that Conſcience is corrupted alſo in a great meaſure by the Fall; the Apoſtle tells, us that *unbelievers mind and Conſcience is defiled,* Titus 1. 15. There is a great

(p) Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίας, ἣν περὶ τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἐπεδείξατο τὸ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐνθεῖναι κριτήριον ἀδέκαστον τὸ συνειδὸς, ἔχον ἀκριβῆ τὴν διάγνωσιν τῶν καλῶν καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων· Chryſoſt. in Geneſin, λογ. ε.

deal

deal of difference between the Conſcience of *Adam* in the ſtate of Innocence, and the Conſcience of a Natural Man. Conſcience is leſs acquainted with the will of God than it was: It has not that Power and Authority to command Obedience that once it had; it is prone, (eſpecially in ſome things,) to be erroneous, and miſtaking, to urge to ſin inſtead of Duty: it does not with ſuch ſtrength and vigour oppoſe temptation, as it ought. But yet ſtill 'tis a great Mercy that Conſcience does ſo much as it does; the light of it might have been totally extinguiſhed, and the Lord might have ſuffered us to have run full-ſpeed in our wicked ways to Deſtruction, without any Monitor within to check or controul us.

2. Conſcience *takes part with God againſt ſin and Satan.* 'Twas the ſaying of an Heathen Poet, Βρότοις ἅπασιν ἡ συνείδησις θεός. *Conſcience is a God unto all Mortal Men*; the reaſon is, becauſe it ſides with God, and aſſents to the equity of his Commands. It declaims againſt ſin, and calls the Devil an Enemy who tempts to the commiſſion of it, and calls the ſinner a Fool and Mad-man for yielding: It conſents unto the Law of God that it is good, and is not ſatisfied, if God be diſpleaſed, if his Law be tranſgreſſed. Oh, let's be thankful for Conſcience, for by endeavouring to hinder our departing from God, and our provoking him to Anger; It does conſult our Peace, our Profit, our Happineſs, and would have us lifted up above thoſe ſlaviſh fears, which are ſo great a torment to the Soul reflecting upon its evil doings. (q)

(q) Θεῷ δεθυῆ διὰ τέλους δίκαιος ὤν·
Μὴ λαμπρὸς ὢν χλαμύσιν ὡς τῇ καρδίᾳ·
Βροντῆς ἀκούσας μηδαμῶς πόῤῥω φυγῆς.
Μηδὲν συνείδως αὐτὸς σὰ υἱῷ
Philemon. Comicus, intra Poet. Minor. pag. 523.

3. Con-

3. Conſcience *takes part with the Soul againſt the Fleſh.* It cannot patiently endure that a vile Body ſhould be onely minded, and a precious Soul totally neglected. How often does Conſcience upbraid us with this? That if our Bodies lack Food, we are extreamly ſollicitous to provide for them, and prevent their ſtarving: but our Souls may want Spiritual food Days, Moneths, Years together, and yet we are not concerned. That if our Bodies want Cloathing, we are aſhamed to be ſeen, and are not contented till we have gotten Raiment to cover their Nakedneſs: But our Souls may be *Naked, Wretched, and Miſerable*: And this Nakedneſs is perceived by the Holy Eye of God, yet we bluſh not, nor apply our ſelves to Chriſt for the white Robe of his Righteouſneſs to cover them. Finally, That if our Bodies are Diſtempered, we ſend for a Phyſitian, and are eager to be Cured: But our Souls may Labour under many Spiritual Plagues; as Hardneſs, Pride, Covetouſneſs, Concupiſcence, which Diſtempers, if not healed, will prove Mortal in the worſt ſence; and yet Chriſt the Phyſitian of Souls is not valued, neither do we cry to be healed, but ſeem rather to be fond of our Maladies. (r) Thus Conſcience does reproach us, to make us aſhamed of our Folly and grow wiſer: Withall telling us, that if our Souls miſcarry, our Bodies hereafter muſt be tormented, which now we are ſo tender of: but if our Souls are ſecured, the Body will be ſafe in the ſame bottom.

4. Conſcience, of *all other Powers, does ſtruggle moſt to prevent our Ruine*: or rather when our other

(r) *Quæ ledunt oculos feſtinas demere? ſiquid*
Eſt animum; differs curandi tempus in annum?
Horat. *Epiſt.* 2. *ad* Lollium.

Powers are forward to promote our Deſtruction, Conſcience endeavours to hinder it. Man is his own chief Enemy, and has the greateſt hand in his own undoing. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf*, Hoſ. 13. 9. If you look into Scripture, you will find how ſinners are bent to tranſgreſs, they will not be made clean; all that is in them, (Conſcience excepted) joyns together to make them miſerable. *Their eyes are full of Adultery, and cannot ceaſe from ſin*, 2 Pet. 2. 14. *Their Tongue is a fire, a World of Iniquity, that it defileth the whole Body, and ſetteth on fire the courſe of Nature, and is ſet on fire of Hell*, James 3. 6. *Their Throat is an open Sepulchre, the poyſon of Aſpes is under their lips*, Rom. 3. 13. They work Iniquity with both hands earneſtly, and their Feet are ſwift in running to evil. Their Wills are exceeding obſtinate and perverſe; they are reſolved to burn in Hell before they will turn from ſin; *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* Ezek. 33. 11. *They will not be perſwaded to Repent, though one ſhould riſe from the Dead*, and tell them of thoſe unquenchable and furious Flames in which the damned are tormented, *Luke* 16. *ult.* Their Affections are ſtrong and vehement for Sin and Vanity, they love ſin better than themſelves, and a vain periſhing World before an infinitely better and enduring Subſtance. Thus all in Man conſpires unto his overthrow: onely Conſcience oppoſes and warns him of his danger, and urges him not to be a Devil to himſelf, nor in the worſt ſence to be a *ſelf-murtherer*, that is to ſay, a *Soul-murtherer*.

3. You have reaſon to be thankful for Conſcience, *for this helps to make the World habitable*. There would be no Living upon Earth if Conſcience were altogether Baniſhed. Every Man (as one ſays) would be a *Cain* to his Brother, an *Amnon* to his Siſter, an

Abſalom

Absalom to his Father, a *Judas* to his Master, a *Saul* to himself, if Conscience did not help to lay some restraint. The goodness of God towards the World is to be admired, in that he has given a Conscience among Men, all things else would quickly run to Confusion, Wickedness would grow high, so as to become intolerable, and Men would be nothing else but Plagues and Tormentors one to another.

Use III. Here is great *encouragement unto Ministers, that there is a Conscience in Man.* The Lusts of Men are against us, because we strike at them; their Humours are against us unless we sinfully endeavour to comply and please them. But their Consciences are for us, and so much the more for us, by how much more faithfully we discharge our Duty. The sharpest rebukes Conscience will say are needful, and will tell the sinner, that *he that hates Reproof, is Brutish, Prov.* 12. 1. And when we denounce the most dreadful threatnings, when sinners come home, Conscience will denounce them over again, and bid them to cast away those Transgressions which are threatned so terribly. We read indeed of *a Rebellious People, Lying Children, Children that would not hear the Law of the Lord; they said to the Seers, see not; and to the Prophets, Prophesie not to us right things; speak unto us smooth things, Prophesie deceits, get ye out of the way, turn aside out of the Path, cause the Holy One of* Israel *to cease from before us.* But all this was the Language of their Corruption, and not of their Consciences. Hark what *Solomon* says, *Prov.* 28. 23. *He that Rebuketh a Man, afterwards shall find more favour, than he that flattereth with his Tongue*: The reason is, because in cool Blood, and when he comes seriously to consider, Conscience will tell him, that sin deserved Rebuke,

and that Rebuke was an Argument of the Love of him that gave it.

Use IV. Since God has placed a Conscience in Man, let me give you this Caution, *Do not think that you are able to extirpate Conscience.* You may be weary of it, but you cannot be rid of it: This Witness, this Judge will be ever with you, whether you will or no. *Augustine* has an Excellent passage to our present purpose. (s) *To what place shall I flie for safety? To what Mountain? To what Cave? To what Tower or Fortress? Within what Walls may I be secure? Wherever I go, I must needs follow and be with my self. O Man, thou mayst flie other things, but not thy own Conscience.* *Aquinas* does Argue very unreasonably, that *Conscientia est actus quia potest deponi.* Conscience is not a Power or Habit, but an Act, because it may be lost; for the contrary unto this is most certainly true.

I grant indeed that you may drown the Voice of Conscience, so that it may speak to little purpose: I grant further, that you may stupifie and silence it, that it may not speak at all; nay, you may fear it as with an hot Iron, but yet these four things must be added.

1. *Conscience remains still, and may awake of a sudden.* Some Providence or other, some remarkable Judgment, Personal or National, may startle it, or the approach of Death may rouze it out of that dead sleep in which before it lay.

(s) *Ad quem locum tutus fugio? ad quem montem? ad quam spelunçam? ad quæ tecta munita? quam arcem teneam? quibus muris ambiar? Quocunque iero sequor Me. Quicquid enim ut potes fugere, Homo, præter conscientiam.* Augustin. *Enarrat.* in *Psalm* 39. pag. (mihi) 164.

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2. *All Excuses for sin will then appear to be vain.* Those Reasons which you thought so strong for sin, and against the ways of God, when an awakened Conscience weighs them in the Ballance of the Sanctuary. *Tekel* may be writ upon them, how light and wanting will they be found? Therefore that Challenge is made, *Isa.* 41. 21. *Produce your Cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong Reasons, saith the King of* Jacob.

3. *All Endeavours to stop the mouth of Conscience may then prove to no purpose.* When thou thinkest of the Blood of Christ, it may reply, thou hast trampled it under Foot; when thou thinkest of the mercy of God, it may reply, that thou hast abused, and turned his Grace into wantonness: thus it may thrust away all the Encouragements of the Gospel.

4. *There may be such horror in thy Conscience, as may be greater than the greatest torments:* All thy pleasures then will shrink and dye away. 'Twas a saying of *Luther, Una guttula malæ Conscientiæ, totum mare mundani gaudii absorbet.* One little drop of an evil Conscience can swallow up a whole Sea of Worldly Joy.

Use V. *Be exhorted to heed Conscience.* As every one should have an Ear to hear what the Spirit of God says; so also what his own Spirit, his own Conscience says to him.

1. Heed Conscience *in its Admonitions, as to things that are to be done*; dare not to go contrary to the dictates of it. If Conscience say, go, go; if come, come; if do this, do it.

2. Heed Conscience *in its censure of things already done.* If Conscience Observe any fault, Oh go and bewail it, desire the pardon of it, and that Power may

presently be given to thee, that thou mayst for the future abstain from it.

Now the motives to prevail with you to heed your own *Consciences*, are these.

1. *Conscience speaks from God to you.* When it bids *you to depart from evil and do good, and dwell for ever more*, *Psal.* 37. 27. This is not the voice of *Conscience* only, but really of God himself. This duty says Conscience I command, this sin I forbid, *yet, not I, but the Lord.* Conscience is Gods Officer, and presses whatever it presses still in Gods Name. It sets the Lord before us, and charges us as we value his loving kindnesse which is better than Life, as we value fellowship with him, that we endeavour to do that which is good in his sight. And as we would escape his anger, and his smoaking jealousie which will utterly consume us; that we beware of that which is worst of evils, sinning against him.

2. *Consider the Power of Conscience*, if we take Power for *Authority*, God has given great Authority unto the Conscience; And a Man must rather disobey Kings and Emperours then disobey Conscience. *Nebuchadnezzar* commanded the three Children to Worship the Golden Image that he had set up; Conscience commanded them to refuse to Worship it. They obey Conscience, and rather than Conscience should fly in their faces for idolatry, they venture to be cast into a fiery furnace, *Dan.* 3. If we take Power for *Ability*, *Conscience* is a thing of greater force and strength. If it be good, how can it sweeten any condition though in it self never so calamitous; but if *Conscience* be bad, 'tis sufficient to put gall and bitternesse into all your Comforts.

3. If you heed *Conscience*, *'tis the way to have you and your Consciences agree together.* Conscience will dwell with you and you cannot help it, Oh therefore

hearken

hearken to it, and satisfie it, for this will be much for your own peace and satisfaction. There is a twofold Peace which it highly concerns us to look after, *Peace above*, and *Peace within*. Peace above with God we should be sollicitous about, there is no contending with Him that is Almighty. *Let the Potsherds strive with the Potsherds of the Earth, but wo unto him that striveth with his Maker*, Esa. 45. 9. How earnest then should we be, that being justified by Faith we may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And next unto peace with God, we should endeavour after peace within, even peace of Conscience; and if we hearken and do what an enlightned *Conscience* commands, and walk before God in Truth. *Conscience* will speak Peace, and that peace it will be true.

4. Consider, *That in the hour of distresse and especially at the time of your dissolution the good Word of Conscience will do more good to you, than all the World.* A cleer *Conscience* makes a triumphant Saint before he does expire. *Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is Peace*, Psal. 37. 37. How many have lookt death in the face, undaunted, because *Conscience* has born witnesse to their sincerity. (*) When *Luther* was sick of his last distemper, and grew towards his end, he waked at midnight, and perceiving his Earthly Tabernacle was falling to the ground; he brake forth into Thanksgiving to God for revealing Christ to him, whom he believed, whom he professed, whom he loved, whom he celebrated, and whom the Pope with the Company of the wicked did persecute. Then he prayed to his Heavenly Father to receive his spirit, and added, *though I must now lay down this Body, yet I know most certainly that I shall ever be with*

(*) Melch. Adamus *in vitâ* Lutheri, pag. 154, 155.

the Lord, and none shall pluck me out of his hand. Here was a *Conscience* cleer, a Death without Fear, and an abundant entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom.

5. Heed *Conscience, for 'twill go with you to the bar of God.* (t) and certainly 'twill be sad to be followed to that Tribunal, by a guilty *Conscience* crying out against you. If *Conscience* excuse you, and plead for you before your Judge, how sweet and comfortable will that be, if it produce sincere obedience, and the Righteousness of Christ apprehended by Faith to cover all your guilt, and make up all your imperfections; this will make you lift up your heads with joy and confidence. But if *Conscience* does accuse you of impenitency in sin all your days, though it often warned you to mourn, and turn; these accusations, as they cannot be evaded, so they will be unconceivably terrifying and confounding to you.

6. Heed *Conscience, for 'twill remain in you for ever,* 'twill be Eternally with the Saints in Glory. After a Believer has fought the good fight, has finished his course, has kept the Faith, has been acquitted at the judgement seat, and has received the Crown of Righteousness, then *Conscience* will be fully at rest. Work is now done, danger is now past, and the possession of the inheritance is secured, *Rev.* 3. 12. *Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.* *Conscience* also will be eternally with the reprobates in misery. And as *Job's* Messengers, did tell him that his Cattel were

(t) *Quando Deus judex erit, alius testis quàm Conscientia tua non erit. Inter Judicem justum, & Conscientiam tuam noli timere nisi causam tuam.* Augustin. *Enarrat.* in Psal. 37. pag. (mihi) 323.

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destroyed, and his Substance taken away, and they only were left alone to tell him. So *Conscience* will speak after the same manner unto the damned. *O you self-destroying Sinners, your consolation is all received, your good things are come to an end, your profits and Pleasures are quite fled away and gone.* And I only am left alone to tell you, *To tell you of your madness in loving sin, in idolizing a vain World, in slighting Salvation, and bringing your selves (notwithstanding all warnings) into Eternal misery.*

I have done with the first Doctrine. *That God has placed a Conscience in Man.*

Doct. 2. The second Doctrine is this. *To have a good Conscience should be every ones greatest care.* This is one end of the Commandement, not onely that there may be Love, a pure Heart, and Faith unfeigned, but *also a good Conscience*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. so 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. *Sanctifie the Lord God in your Hearts, having a good Conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you as of Evil doers, they may be ashamed who falsly accuse your good Conversation in Christ.* 'Tis the observation of *Augustine* (u) that Men are willing to have all things else good, but their Consciences are bad, and they themselves are Evil. There is no man but desires his Wife should be good, his Children good, his

(u) *Ecce quid prodest plena bonis arca, inanis Conscientia? Bona vis habere, & bonus non vis esse? Non vides te erubescere debere de bonis tuis, si domus tua plena est bonis, & te habet malum? Quid enim est quod velis habere malum? Nihil omnino; non uxorem, non filium, non filiam, non servum, non ancillam, non villam, non tunicam, postremo non caligam, & tamen vis habere malam vitam.* August. *De verbis Domini*, Serm. 12. pagin. mihi 57. Tom. 10.

Servants good, the House that he dwells in good, the Air he lives in good, the Food he eats good, the Clothes he wares good, he does not care to have any thing bad about him. How comes it to passe that he is too well content to have a bad Conscience within him? This is our natural folly which it highly concerns us to be Cured of.

In the prosecution of this point, I shall first *declare what a good Conscience is.* Secondly, I shall shew *how the acts of a good Conscience, and the Acts of the good Spirit of God are to be distinguished.* Thirdly, *produce some reasons why it does so highly concern every man to have a good Conscience.* Lastly, *Make Application.*

In the first place I am to open what a good *Conscience* is, and before I speak to this, it will not be amiss to premise these particulars.

1. *Conscience was good, very good in Adam, when he was first made, and so continued while he remained in the state of innocency.* Oh the Light, and Grace, and Peace that was in *Adams* Soul, when he was newly come out of his Creators hand! There was a far sweeter Paradise within, than that *Eden* in which he was placed. When the Lord was about to form Man, he said *Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness*, *Gen.* 1. 26. and ver. 27. it follows, *so God created Man in his own Image*, nay 'tis doubled, *in the Image of God created he him.* As Man did resemble God in Holiness and Righteousnesse, so he did resemble him in Peace and Blessedness. Man was made upright, there was nothing in him, that either God or Conscience did disapprove of. His Purity was without spot, his Righteousness without any mixture of sin, his joy was without grief or remorse, his peace calm, without the least storm or trouble.

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2. *The Conscience of Man was defiled and wounded by his fall.* Sin did throw the Apostate Angels quite to Hell; *the chains of Darknesse* in which those evil Spirits are, may well be interpreted partly to be their guilty and tormenting Consciences, which they can never be freed from, but will keep them trembling till the great day. And truly sin did throw Man down to the very brink of Hell. Who can conceive that horrour which was in *Adams* Soul till *the promised Seed* was spoken of, till he had an intimation of the *Messiah*? We are not chiefly to take notice of the act of eating the forbidden fruit, but *Adams* Mind in Eating. How great was his Pride! he would have been as God: how cursed his unbelief! he makes God a Lyar, and credits the Father of Lies before him. Nay, since this Tree was appointed for trial, whether man would continue good, or become evil, his Eating of it shewed a contempt of that Covenant, and promise of Life which God had made with him. By all this how was his Conscience polluted! *Adam where art thou?* says God, *Gen.* 3. 9. Thou wert neer me once, but whither art thou run away? I placed thee in an happy state, but whither art thou fallen; into what depths of misery hast thou plunged thy self?

3. *The Conscience of every natural Man in the World is Evil.* Since all are conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, it follows that the nature of Man is corrupted, there is no part or power in man, but the contagion of sin has reached. *In me that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing*, sayes the Apostle, *Rom.* 7. 18. Now our Lord calls all natural men; Flesh: *That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh*, *John* 3. 6. And if in the Flesh there dwels no good thing, Surely a good Conscience is not to be found in any carnal man breathing. I affirmed before, that Conscience has scaped best

best of any Faculty, in the Fall, and yet it must need be acknowledged, that this has been bruised, this has been Wounded.

The Light which Conscience now has, if compared with what it had before the Fall, is no more than the light of a Candle compared with the Sun: 'tis Night still though the Candle burns; and onely the Sun can make it Day. Something of God and of his Will, natural Conscience knows; but how insufficient is this knowledge! Conscience urges Men to Duty, but 'tis Natural to it to permit them to place a confidence in what they do, as if by their Obedience some amends were made for their transgressions; and this is a great fault in it, and a very grand Impediment unto the receiving of the Gospel, which informs us, that *we must Rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the Flesh*, Phil. 3. 3. How dull and sluggish is Conscience Naturally in the Executing of its Office! As *Eli* spake something to his Sons, but faintly; and therefore he is blamed exceedingly, that his Sons *made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* So the ungodly make themselves vile, and Conscience does not restrain them: 'tis not so peremptory in its prohibitions and commands; so fierce in its accusations, neither does it Judge with such Authority as it ought.

4. *'Tis possible and usual for a Conscience to approve good when 'tis stark naught.* Though all Gold glisters, yet all is not Gold that glisters. All Grace shines, yet all is not Grace that shines. There is a Conscience that is so mistaken, *as to call good evil, and evil good, as to put darkness for light, and light for darkness*, Isa. 5. 20. And if evil be called good, and darkness light; how eagerly, and resolutely will evil be Acted, and the Works of Darkness be engaged in! The Jews when they Persecuted the Son of God, thought they did

did God good Service: Here was a Conſcience that ſeemed Zealous for God, but was indeed againſt him. Mens Conſciences in many caſes entertain high ſelf-conceits, where there is no ground, *Prov.* 30. 12. *There is a Generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their filthineſs.* So *Laodicea* did ſay, *I am Rich, and increaſed with Goods, and have need of nothing*: But this was the Ignorance and unfaithfulneſs of their Conſcience. Chriſt ſays to them, *Thou knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor and blind, and naked*, Rev. 3. 17.

5. *'Tis neceſſary that the Spirit work a ſaving change before the Conſcience of any can be truly good*: this is to be found onely in them that are New Creatures. None can be ſaid to have good Conſciences, that are under the Power of Satan, that ſerve divers Luſts and Pleaſures, that walk after the Fleſh, that are workers of Iniquity; but ſuch are all who never were regenerated by the Spirit. 'Tis the *Blood of Chriſt muſt purge the Conſcience from dead works*. But none can be ſaid to be in Chriſt, nor to have a purged Conſcience but they who have been New created, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *Therefore if any Man be in Chriſt he is a New Creature, Old things are paſt away, behold, all things are become New.* I grant that Conſcience may be awakened in many unregenerate ſinners, but the bare awakening of it is not ſufficient to prove it good; for then in Hell there would be Excellent Conſciences, for all there are awakened throughly. Notwithſtanding awakenings, Conſcience in the ungodly continues evil, as long as the guilt of ſin remains unremoved, and the Soul is ſtill under the Dominion and Power of it.

6. *The Conſciences of the regenerate are not good, in reſpect of Legal Perfection and Exactneſs.* The firſt *Adam*, before his Apoſtacy, was able to reach this Ex-

Exactness, which the Law required; he was able to Obey the Law of God without Offending in a tittle. Christ also the second *Adam*, did fulfill the Law without the least Transgression all his days. He was like unto his Brethren in other regards, *but sin is excepted*, Heb. 4. 15. So *Heb.* 7. 26. *Such an High-Priest became us, who is Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens.* But truly the best of Saints fall short. Surely they are unacquainted with the Law of God, that imagine they are able perfectly to Obey it; it may justly be suspected that they put short glosses upon it, and then fancy they fulfill it: but questionless they are ignorant of its strictness and Spirituality.

As 'tis said of God himself, *that he is of purer eyes than to behold Evil, and cannot look upon Iniquity*, Habak. 1. 13. So it may be said of his Law, 'tis purer than to allow any evil, than to approve of the least Iniquity. No Conscience therefore, in a Legal sence, can be affirmed to be good, for the Holy Ghost does not stick to say, *There is not a Just man upon Earth that does good and sins not*, Eccles. 7. 20. The Consciences of Saints see sin but in part, therefore *David* crys out, *Cleanse me from secret sins, who can understand his Errors?* Psal. 19. 12. and Psal. 139. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* And as the Consciences of the best are capable of more light than they have, so more purity and tenderness may also be attained.

7. *Conscience may be good according to the Law of Grace, though sin is not totally purged away.* The very Apostle *Paul*, which says, he had a good Conscience before God, does yet say, *Not as though I had attain-*

attained, or were already perfect, Phil. 3. 12. Nay, he does acknowledge that *ſin did dwell in him*, he complains *of a Law in his Members*, and crys out, *O wretched Man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this death?* Rom. 7. 20, 23, 24. Conſcience is good in a Goſpel-ſence, though ſin remain, as long as it does not Reign in us, and we are no longer willing to Obey it in the Luſts of it. Now, if you ask me, in what regard Conſcience is good notwithſtanding ſome remainders of evil: I Anſwer,

1. *Conſcience is good comparatively*; how vaſt a difference between Saints and Sinners! How careful the one, how careleſs the other! How are the former afraid of offending God! how are the latter preſumptuous and bold! How are their Hearts ſet in them to do evil! When *Noah* is ſaid *to be a Juſt Man, and Perfect in his Generation*, Gen. 6. 9. This is hinted, that he was Juſt, compared with the men of his Generation; and his Righteouſneſs was the more to be admired, ſince he kept himſelf unpolluted by their wickedneſs.

2. Conſcience may be ſaid *to be good ſincerely*, when in the ſpirit of a man *there is no guile*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſal.* 32. 2. When there is no ſin, but the ſoul conſents to be delivered from it, and no Grace but the ſoul deſires to be enriched with it; and no Command, but 'tis willing to Obey it, and where it falls ſhort 'tis grieved; and becauſe it has not attained, therefore *'tis continually preſſing towards the Mark*, and *perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God.* (*)

(*) *Perfecti et non perfecti*, Phil. 3. *Perfecti viatores, nondum perfecti poſſeſſores, et noveritis, quod perfectos viatores dicat, qui jam in viâ ambulant. Quid eſt ambulare? Breviter dico, proficere, ne forte non intelligatis, & pigrius ambuletis. Semper tibi diſpliceas quod es, ſivis pervenire ad id quod nondum es. Nam ubi tibi placuiſti, ibi remanſiſti. Si autem dixeris, ſufficit, periiſti. Semper adde, ſemper ambula, ſemper proſice. Noli in viâ remanere, noli retro redire, noli deviare.* Aug. *De verbis Apoſtoli.* Ser. 15. pag. mihi 338. Tom. 10.

3. Con-

3. Conscience may be said to be good, *so as to be accepted.* We Serve a very gracious Lord, who is not extream to mark our Offences, though we come short in point of performance; yet if he sees we unfeignedly desire and purpose to please him, such is his Fatherly indulgence, that he does accept us, not according to what we have not, but according to what we have. *I know, O my God,* says *David, that thou tryest the Heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness,* 1 Chron. 29. 17. If upon tryal of the heart, he finds 'tis turned towards himself, he takes delight in it.

4. Notwithstanding many failings which are unallowed of and mourned over, *Conscience may be said to be good, so as to be rewarded.* Evangelical good works, though they are not meritorious, yet they are rewardable; therefore a reward is spoken of, and assured in Scripture to Believers, *Rev.* 22. 12. *Behold I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give to every Man according as his work shall be.* God promises to be himself *a Reward to Abraham,* Gen. 15. 1. and so he will be to all the Children of *Abraham.* Christ will Reward them with Salvation that do Obey him, *Heb.* 5. 9. *And being made perfect he became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that do Obey him.* If Conscience bear us witness that we are diligent in Trading with those Talents which are delivered to us, we may be assured that at last we shall hear, *Well done good and Faithful Servants, Enter you into the Joy of your Lord.* We may wonder exceedingly that such a Reward should be promised to a good Conscience (and shall we not wonder much more when the Reward is Actually received?) Since our Obedience is so lame, and our goodness so imperfect: But we must remember that the Saints imperfections are covered by Christ, and *in him all the promises of God*

and

and surely then the promises of Reward *are yea and Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. And therefore Eternal Life, which is the Reward promised and expected, is also called *a free-gift*, and said to *be given through Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. 6. 23.

These things being thus premised, I am to tell you what a good Conscience is.

Bernard speaking of a good Conscience, does very well, and also wittily affirm, (x) *That Conscience is truly good, where Mercy and Truth are met together, and Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.* The truth of the Gospel does reveal the mercy of God in Christ, and this mercy must by Faith be apprehended; Peace follows upon the obtaining of mercy, and if the Peace be of the right kind, 'twill be joyned with the Love and Practice of Righteousness.

The goodness of Conscience is of great extent; one single thing is not sufficient to constitute it good. I shall therefore in several particulars shew wherein the goodness of it does consist; and also as I go along, which will be highly needful, direct you how this goodness may be attained to in every part of it.

1. The goodness of Conscience lies in its *Illumination, and being rightly informed.* Conscience is to be a guide, but that is not to be called a good guide, which is either blind, or does mistake. *If the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness?* Mat. 6. 23. Upon this score Wisdom and Knowledge in Scripture are so much commended; and we are so frequently commanded to seek, and to get Understand-

(x) *Felix Conscientia, in quâ veritas & misericordia obviaverunt sibi; justitia & pax osculatæ sunt.* Bern. *de Int. Dom* pag. 1060.

ing, *Job* 28. 18, 19 *No mention shall be made of Coral, or of Pearls, for the price of Wisdom is above Rubies. The topaz of Æthiopia cannot equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure Gold.* So, *Prov.* 3. 13, 14, 15. *Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Man that getteth Understanding; for the Merchandize of it is better than the Merchandize of Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold. She is more precious than Rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her.* And *Prov.* 4. 7. *Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom, and with all thy gettings get understanding.* 'Tis confessed that Conscience may be enlightned, and yet remain bad, no improvement being made of the Light of it; but yet this is certain, that Conscience cannot be good unless it be enlightned. As we say, there may be Knowledge without saving Faith, but not saving Faith without Knowledge: So here, there may be Knowledge without this goodness of Conscience, but not a good Conscience without this Ingredient of Knowledge.

But you will ask me, what kind of Knowledge is that which is in a good Conscience? I Answer,

1. The knowledge of a good Conscience *is so extensive, as that it understands all things that be of Necessity to be believed and practised, in Order to Salvation.* No Fundamental Article of Faith, or Duty of Christianity but is known. The Conscience cannot be good unless there be *a knowledge of the onely true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,* John 17. 3. Unless we are acquainted with what the Lord requires of us; namely, to Repent of sin, to believe in Jesus, to do justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. Though that Promise, *John* 16. 13. *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall guide you into all Truth,* may have a special reference to the Apostles,

who

who were to publish the Gospel unto all Nations, and so had need to be certainly informed themselves; yet 'tis applicable unto all Believers, they shall by the Spirit be led into all Truth Necessary to be known and Obeyed.

2. The Knowledge of a good Conscience *is true, in Opposition unto Error and Falshood.* 'Tis a Beam which comes *from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, James 1. 17. All true Wisdom is from above; 'tis through the Precepts of the Lord, that Conscience does get a right Understanding; and hence it comes to pass, that false ways are discovered and abhorred, *Psal.* 119. 104. 'Tis very sad to have an Erroneous Conscience, for in this case Conscience does back the Devils commands with God's Authority. An Erring Conscience does bind the Person, I confess, so that he sins if he does not heed his Conscience; for Interpretatively, he goes against the Will of God; for Conscience, though it command what is evil, yet requires it as that which is conceived to be good, and what God has commanded. He that shall injure or affront a Private Person, thinking him to be the King, is justly censured to have Acted against the King, because, suppose the King had really been in his reach, he would have affronted him. So, he that goes against Conscience which errs when it tells him, This is the Will of God, would go against Conscience, supposing it were really the Lords Will. So, that 'tis certain the Person is bound by an Erring Conscience: But truly, to speak properly, there cannot be an Obligation unto the Error of the Conscience, there cannot be an Obligation to the Evil that an Erroneous Conscience puts us upon. All proper Obligation is from the Law and Will of God, but the Word of God does forbid all evil; nay, forbids the least Evil to be done, whatever good is likely to follow upon the doing

of it. *Their damnation is just who do evil that good may come, Rom.* 3.8.

A man whose Conscience erreth is under a miserable kind of necessity of sinning; if he goes against his Conscience he sins, because Conscience commands him in Gods name; if he go according to his Conscience he sins, because Conscience is mistaken, and commands what God has really prohibited and forbidden. What great enemies are Seducers and false Prophets unto Conscience? they Preach up their Errors as the Truths of Christ, and hereby they mis-inform and ensnare souls; and truly where there is a presumptuous and unwary boldness as to errour, as if there were no danger of it, or in it, a thousand to one but Conscience may quickly be corrupted. But here it may be demanded, what shall a man do whose Conscience errs? I answer 'tis his duty to put away such a Conscience, and to intreat the Lord that he may be rightly informed. A good Conscience is thus informed, and speaks to us nothing but what is true in the Name of the Lord. It does *beware* of *false* Prophets, and will not *follow strangers*, 'tis a great enemy *to divers and strange Doctrines, Heb.* 13.9. It dislikes Superstition, will-worship, and all humane inventions, its fear of God is not taught by the precepts of men: but what is from *heaven*, that it minds: what God would have done that it enquires after, and is acquainted with. If you ask me here whether a good mans Conscience may not err? I answer, in some smaller things it may, but this erring is no part of the goodness of his Conscience, and therefore both himself and others should endeavour his being brought to a better understanding.

3. The knowledge of a good Conscience is *certain, in opposition unto dubiousness*; 'tis grounded upon that Reve-

Revelation which the Lord has made of his own will. A good Conscience looks into, and searches the Holy Scriptures, and is fully assured that what is made known, either as a matter of Faith or Practice, is indeed the Mind of God; for all *Scripture is of Divine inspiration*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. This certainty of Knowledge the Apostle does emphatically expresse, when he calls it *The Riches of the full assurance of understanding*, *Col.* 2. 2. Conscience which is good, is certain both of the mysteries of Faith, and the duties of Religion, and entertains the one, and urges unto the doing of the other.

This certainty is opposed unto dubiousnes, when the Conscience through infirmity and weakness is at a loss, and knowes not what to do in some cases: Just as a man Travelling meets with two ways and knows not which is the right, when he turns to the right hand he doubts, and so turns to the left, and when he turns to the left Hand, he doubts whether that will bring him to his journies end, and so is ready to turn back to the right again. Saints themselves may thus be in doubt sometimes; but this is no part of the goodnesse of their Conscience; but an Argument onely of their weakness. And in this case as the Lord is earnestly to be sought to *make their way plain before them*, So they are to *follow the Footsteps of the Flock*, and in those doubtful matters, to observe which way the Holiest and best, both of Ministers and Saints do go, and to accompany them. When the Spouse sayes, *Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loves) where thou feedest, where thou makest thy Flocks to rest at Noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the Flocks of thy Companions?* Christ answers, If thou would'st know, *O thou fairest among Women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the Flock, and feed thy Kids beside the Shepherds*

Tents, Cant. 1. 7, 8. and So *Prov.* 2. 20. *That thou mayest walk in the way of good men and keep the paths of the Righteous.* Misapprehend me not, I do not make this a general rule, that we are in all things to follow good men. But where the Conscience doubts on both hands, and is afraid it sins which side soever it takes. In this case the Footsteps of the Flock are to be minded, and we must keep close to the Shepherds Tents; and being humble and reachable, this weakness and dubiousness may be cured; and the Lord may bless means of instruction, to make us see that plainly which before we were in the dark about.

4. The knowledge of a Conscience is *satisfying*, in *opposition unto scrupulousnesse.* As wisdome is profitable, so also delightful, *Prov.* 2. 10. *When wisdom enters into thy Heart, and Knowledge is pleasant to thy Soul.* As there is great contentment when the will embraces and enjoys *good*, so there is great satisfaction when the understanding and Conscience have found out and do entertain *Truth.* But on the other hand scrupulousness is very tormenting. These scruples are things which arise from weak and sometimes from no ground at all, and the Lord does permit Believers themselves to be exercised with them, to correct former sins against Conscience, and also to try their present tenderness. In Melancholy persons these scruples are most frequent, and in them whose knowledge is but small.

A scrupulous Conscience differs from a doubting, in that a doubting is afraid *on both hands*, a scrupulous is satisfied *on one part*, but is sollicitous and full of fear in reference to the other. He had a scrupulous Conscience that did question the lawfulness of *eating all things*, but he was satisfied concerning *eating Herbs*, *Rom.* 14. 2. Now this scrupulousness is really a fault as well as a vexa-

vexation of Conscience, and therefore by well weighing of things; and diligent looking into the word; and not making more sins than the word declares to be so; and by understanding better our Christian liberty; we should endeavour to be rid of our needless scruples. These scruples if we take not heed, will be so much attended to, as that weightier matters may be neglected; they will make the service of the Lord less comfortable: and Satan will get advantage to represent his yoak as the more heavy and burthensome. But when Conscience is freed from these, 'tis just as if a stone should be taken out of our shooe; (*y*) with greater ease, and chearfulness we shall go, nay Run in the way of Gods Commandments.

5. The knowledge of a good Conscience *is operative, and incites to practice.* That passage of our Lord is deeply engraven upon a good and honest heart, *Joh.* 13. 17. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Barely to know will not make us happy, nay, 'twill make us more miserable, because more inexcusable. Though a good Conscience eyes the obedience and sufferings of Christ, and there is an hope of acceptation and pardon only upon that account; yet because by Faith the Law is not made void, but established, therefore it urges obedience to the Law. The Covenant of Grace having first said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved*, in a qualified sence also sayes, *Do this and Live.* Sincere obedience is required, or else Life will never be obtained, *Rev.* 22. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandements that*

(*y*) *Conscientia scrupulosa nomen habet a scrupo, qui est lapillus in calceo hominem ladens, & in incessu impediens.* Bald. *de Consc.* l. 1. c. 10.

they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the City. The Light of a good Conscience urges to the casting off the works of Darknesse and to walk circumspectly, and to do this without delay. As the *Egyptians*, when their first-born were destroyed, hastned the Israelites to be gone; for said they *we be all Dead men*: So Conscience hastens us to part with such a deadly thing as sin, and bids us not delay to keep Gods Righteous Judgements.

You see what kind of knowledge is that of a good Conscience: but here the great enquiry will be, how may Conscience be well informed, and this kind of knowledge obtained?

1. That Conscience may be well informed, *the Scripture must be well searched.* Holy men of old digged in this Mine for knowledge, and found their labour well bestowed. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is Sure making Wise the simple, Psal.* 19. 7. There is more of God revealed and made known in a leaf of the Bible, than in the whole Book of Nature. *Horace* does commend *Homer* the Writer of the *Trojan* War, upon this account. *Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non; Plenius & melius Chrysippo & Crantore dixit.* Because he tells best of all what is Fair and Lovely, and what is Foul and Filthy, what is Profitable, and what is Hurtful. But what are *Homers* Writings, compared with the Holy Scripture? This, this, does most fully inform the Conscience what is good and what is evill, and what will do us good, and what will be evil and injurious to us.

The Scripture must be *searched*, we must look beyond the surface, Truth sometimes lies deep, therefore *Solomon* uses that expression. *Prov.* 2. 4. 5. *If*

thou

thou ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her, as for hid Treaſures, then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God. As the Scripture contains ſuch a full diſcovery of the Will of God, ſo there are ſeveral promiſes made, that it ſhall be a guide unto the Conſcience, and direct us in a ſafe way, *Prov.* 6. 22, 23. *When thou goeſt, it ſhall lead thee; when thou ſleepeſt, it ſhall keep thee; when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee; for the Commandement is a lamp, and the Law is Light, and the Reproofs of Inſtruction are the Way of Life.* So Prov. 4. 12. 13. *Take faſt hold of Inſtruction; let her not go, for ſhe is thy Life; when thou goeſt thy ſteps ſhall not be ſtraitned; and when thou runneſt thou ſhalt not ſtumble.*

2. That Conſcience may be well informed, *The Spirit of God muſt be begged for.* Conſcience does very much imitate the Spirit. Does the Spirit reprove for ſin? ſo does Conſcience. Does the Spirit Comfort? ſo does Conſcience. Does the Spirit move us unto our duty? ſo does Conſcience. And indeed 'tis by the aid and Grace of the Spirit that Conſcience does all this. And as Conſcience is a weak thing; ſo alſo a dark thing without the Spirit. Hark to the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17, 18. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty; but we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* The Spirit in the glaſs of the Goſpel, does give the Mind and Conſcience ſuch a ſight of the Beauty of Holineſs, as that there is a change wrought in the very Heart; the Image of God, which does conſiſt in Righteouſneſs and True Holineſs, is inſtamped upon it. We ſhould with great earneſtneſs ask the Spirit, for as he is the Spirit of *Holineſs*, ſo alſo the Spirit of *Truth*, of *Wiſdom and Revelation*, who alone

can

can *open the Eyes of the Understanding*, *Eph.* 1. 17. [illegible] And besides our Heavenly Father has promised *to give the Spirit unto them that ask him, with much more willingness than Earthly Parents will give bread to their own Children.*

3. That Conscience may be well informed, *He must walk with the wise*; that's the way to be wise ourselves, *Prov.* 13. 20. *He that walketh with the Wise shall be Wise, but a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed.* There is a destructive infection in Sin & error, therefore those cautions of our Lord. *Take heed what you Hear*, and *Take heed whom you Hear.* And the Apostle tells us that the Words of false Teachers will *Eat like a canker*, or like a Gangreen. Gangreen spread strangely, and the gangren'd member is cut off for the preservation of the Body. On the other side there is a kind of sanative or healing contagion in Wisdome; by conversing with Saints, and Spiritual guides, that are humble, and holy, and well instructed in the things of God, by degrees we shall come to have our senses better exercised *to discern both Good and Evil.*

4. Let this be your design in desiring that Conscience may be informed well; *that you may do well, according to that information.* When Christ asked the blind man that had had sight miraculously given to him, *Dost thou Believe on the Son of God?* he answers, *Who is he Lord that I might Believe on him? Joh.* 9. 35, 36. He askes who he was, as being very ready to Believe on him. So should we inquire, Lord what is thy will that we may do it? what are thy Commands that we may yeild obedience to them? What is the reason why the Lord will teach the humble? 'tis because these desire to know, that they may Do what is required, they have submitted themselves unto God, and he sees that

if they are entrusted with the Talent of Knowledge, they will Trade with it.

5. *Beware exceedingly of false Lights.* If a false Light get into the Conscience, what sad work will it make there? When men take a lye to be truth, how zealous are they in a bad matter? 'Tis a high piece of cursed art in the Devil to winde himself into the Consciences of men; he gets into their wills and into their affections more easily. He layes before them his ordinary baits of pleasures and profits and preferments. And in all this, he is no other than *the God of this world*, here is no need of any great Metamorphosis, for he knows that these things will easily take with the foolish and corrupt hearts of sinners. But that he may get into the Conscience, he acts more subtilly. *He transforms himself into an Angel of light*, and he transforms his instruments too, so that they seem *to be the Ministers of Righteousness*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 14, 15. he puts sheeps cloathing upon the ravening Wolves, that they may more easily prey upon the flock of Christ. Surely the cunning of this enemy, especially since we are warned, should make us wary.

But since every light doth pretend to be true, how shall we know which is false? Certainly we must try the Spirits by the written Word, *Isa.* 8. 20. *To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, 'tis because there is no Light in them.* The Word is of Divine Authority, whoever rejects it, has no understanding: whoever does wrest it (that is, does make some passages of it to speak against it self, and the whole design of it) he does it to his own destruction; nay though an Angel from Heaven, should Preach a Doctrine contrary to it, we must stifly oppose him, and boldly say, *He is accursed*, Gal. 1. 8.

2. As

2. As the goodness of Conscience lies in its illumination and being rightly informed; *So in the due exercise of its Authority and Power.* The force of Conscience is very great when 'tis exerted; so that good men have lookt upon themselves as *Debtors*, and not to have paid their debts unless they have done their duty, *Rom.* 1. 14. *I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise, so as much as in me is, I am ready to Preach the Gospel to you that be at* Rome *also*, they have lookt upon themselves as bound in Spirit, *Act.* 20. 22. *And now behold I go bound in the Spirit unto* Jerusalem, *not knowing the things that shall befall me there:* and being thus bound in Spirit he could not give himself a latitude and dispensation, though the Holy Ghost did witnesse in every City, that Bonds and Afflictions did abide him. Conscience has made good men to conclude themselves under a *necessity* to obey, and they have professed they *could not do otherwise*, 1 Cor. 9. 16. *Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I Preach not the Gospel*, and so Act. 4. 20. *We cannot but speak the things which we have Seen and Heard.* Now what that Power and Authority is which a good Conscience exercises, I shall shew you.

1. Conscience has Authority and Power *to control the commands of the highest Potentates on Earth, if they agree not with the Law of God. Darius* makes a Law, that *none should ask any Petition of any God or Man for thirty dayes together, but only of himself who was the King*, *Dan.* 6. 7. 9. But *Daniels* Conscience told him, that that Law which did restrain prayer from the God of Heaven, was impious: and therefore though the penalty was being cast into the Lyons Den, *He went to his House, and he opened his Window,*

to

to shew he was not afraid or ashamed, either of his God, or of his service, *and he kneeled upon his knees, and three times a day, prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did afore-time*, v. 10. When the Jewish rulers laid injunctions upon the Apostles, which were contrary to what Christ had enjoyned, they speak thus; *Whether it be right in the sight of God that we should obey you rather than God, judge ye*, Act. 4.19.

But here I must add, that when the Commands of Magistrates are broken, because against Conscience; we had need to look to it, that Conscience have sufficient warrant from the Word of God. For though we suffer never so peaceably and patiently, the penalty which humane Laws inflict; 'tis no reputation to the Government, that the Lawes are such, as good men and Conscientious cannot comply with: and of this reputation, so far as possibly we may, we ought to be very tender. Certainly we are to obey *Magistrates, and to be ready unto every goodwork*, and onely when they command evil are we exempted from obedience.

2. *Conscience* has authority and power *to cross our secular interest though the gain, if unlawful, which is offered, be never so great.* In all debates concerning profit, God allows *Conscience* a Negative voice. Those pleas for unlawful courses which are urged from the advantageousness of them, Conscience sayes are naught; and that it is a mad venture, to hazzard the salvation of the soul, for a little of the Mammon of unrighteousness. When *Achitophel* gave counsel to *Absalom* which was likely to destroy *David*. *Absalom* sayes *let us hear what* Hushai *the Archite also advise* 2 Sam. 17. 5. *Hushai* answers, *ver.* 7. *The counsel of* Achitophel *is not good.* So when the carnal minde does

counsel not to stand upon strict points of honesty, where gain is to be gotten; Conscience will deal plainly, and say, this counsel is not good: (z) *for they that will thus be rich, do fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.* The corrupt mind indeed, which is destitute of the truth, does suppose that gain is Godliness; but the good Conscience thwarts it, and sayes, *Godliness with contentment is great gain.*

3. Conscience has authority and power, *to prohibit and forbid the practice of the most beloved sin*: Concerning a *Delilah*, or an *Herodias*, 'twill say, *'Tis not lawfull for thee to have her.* As in the natural body, whatever the constitution be, there is a mixture of all the four humours, but one usually is predominant, from whence a man is denominated, Sanguine, or Phlegmatick, or Cholerick, or Melancholick: So in the body of sin though there are the seeds of all wickedness; yet some particular corruption commonly is most prevalent. Now conscience has authority to strike at this that is the favorite. Conscience told *David* he could not be upright before God unless he kept himself from *his own iniquity*, and therefore he abstained from it, *Psal.* 18. 23. The sin that naturally is most beloved, there is most reason to hate it, for God is most dishonoured, and the soul is most defiled, and endangered by it. And if Conscience may make bold to check Temptations to the most beloved sins, surely it may caution against any sin whatsoever, and indeed, it

(z) *Ista tibi melius suadet, qui ut rem facias, rem,*
Si possis recte, si non quocunque modo rem?
Horat. Epist. 1.

does

does not go beyond its authority when it forbids as much as God himself does: for it is Gods under-officer to prevent as much as may be all trangression.

4. Conscience has power and authority *to enjoyn the most difficult duties.* 'Tis difficult to ponder the path of our feet, and in all places, and relations, and capacities, and employments, to walk circumspectly; 'tis difficult to set a watch before the door of our lips, that sinful and idle words come not out, which will but tend to make our account sad at the day of judgement: 'tis difficult especially to keep our hearts with all diligence, that God may have them, and the world and sin may not run away with them. How much pains will it cost us, to conflict with wicked and impertinent thoughts: to observe the first stirrings of corruption, and to quench these sparks presently before they be blown up into a flame; to engage in a constant combate with the flesh, which is continually lusting against the Spirit! But though all this be difficult, and the flesh cryes out, *These are hard sayings*, yet Conscience urges to it, and puts us in minde, that the word is the more to be loved *because 'tis very pure*, Psal. 119. 140. and, that the more we keep from sin, the greater is our freedom, perfection, peace.

5. Conscience has Power and Authority *to presse unto the greatest hardships and sufferings for Christs sake.* The Gospel is called λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ *the Word of the Crosse*, 1 Cor. 1. 18. not onely because it Preaches Christ Crucified, but also a conformity to him as crucified. And as our Lord was Crucified before he was glorified, so we must be willing to take up the Cross, that we may come to the Kingdom, to follow him in his Temptations, that we may follow after him

to

to the Throne. Conscience tells us that there is no reason to be offended in Christ, for he never calls us to part with any thing but what is vain, nor to endure any thing but what he will sanctifie and sweeten to us, and we are not to think much of afflictions, that *are but light*, that are *but for a Moment*, that work *for us*, and that work for us *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

And when tempted in the time of persecution to fall away, Conscience also layes before us, the wrath of God, which is ten thousand times more dreadful than the wrath of persecutors, and 'twill be but a poor relief to be delivered out of their hands, and to *fall into the hands of the Living God*. When *Spira* against his Conscience had renounced the Protestant Religion, and in Word had publickly owned the Romish corruptions: Alas what did he get by it? the torments of his Conscience were worse than any Inquisition; and the despair he was overwhelmed with, made his condition worse than if he had endured the very uttermost of Papal cruelty. Some of his words were these: *What a dangerous thing is it to dissemble upon any terms in those matters where the Glory of God is concerned! what a fearful thing is it to be* neer *and* almost *a Christian! Oh that God would let loose his hand from me! that it were with me now as in times past! I would scorn the threats of the most cruel Tyrants, bear torments with invincible resolution, and Glory in the outward profession of Christ, till I were choaked in the flame, and my Body consumed to ashes.*

Thus great is the Power and Authority of Conscience, and a good Conscience does Exercise this Authority; but because the Consciences of most seem to have lost all Power, therefore I shall direct you how this Power of Conscience may be put forth with vigour.

your. WOuld you be under the Power and Authority of Conscience? then,

1. Meditate upon this, *how Holy and equal the Law is.* Since we are reasonable Creatures 'tis fit we be govern'd by some Law or other, (a) and what laws are comparable to the Law of God? man stands in need of a Law that may put bounds to his Will and Affections, as well as regulate his Conversation; humane Laws onely reach the latter, but the Law of God principally requires Holiness in the former. The Angels themselves are not without a Law: the Apostate ones transgressed it, and were cast down to Hell: *God spared not the Angels that sinned,* 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. the Elect Angels are affirmed to do *the Commandements of God, and to hearken to the Voice of his Word, Psal.* 103. 20. And truly all the Commands of the Lord are Holy just and good, the more we obey these, the greater is our Liberty and freedom from the Power and Tyranny of Sin and Satan unto whom whosoever are subject, they are defiled, degraded, debased, and made miserable by that subjection.

2. Consider not only the equalness of the Law, but *the greatness and goodness of the Lawgiver.* Conscience tells you of a Lord, who has right to rule you. He has given you your Being, and upholds you in your Being you could not *live or move or be without*

(a) *Omnium quæ in hominum Doctorum disputatione versantur nihil est profectò præstabilius, quam plane intelligi nos ad justitiam esse natos, neque opinione sed naturâ jus constitutum esse.* Cicero, *de leg.* l. p. 221.

him. And therefore by all right imaginable, he is your owner and your Governour. *We are Debtors,* ſays the Apoſtle, *not to the fleſh to live after the fleſh, for if we live after the fleſh we ſhall dye, Rom.* 8. 12, 13. he does not expreſly ſay we are Debtors to God, this was ſo evident there was no need to expreſs it. The Lord is ſo great that he may claim obedience from us, for we owe him whatever we have and are: and his goodneſs does fully match his greatneſs. He is *Optimus & Maximus,* there is abundant reaſon then, why you ſhould liſten unto Conſcience preſſing you to give him the pre-eminence before *all other Lords* whatſoever. No King comparable to the King of Saints, how ready is he to defend them; how much does he conſult his ſubjects welfare.

3. Would you be under the Authority and Power of Conſcience? fix this upon your Spirits, *that a good Conſcience alwayes uſes its Power for your good.* I may here apply thoſe words which the Apoſtles uſes concerning Magiſtrates, *Wilt thou not be afraid of the Power? do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have Praiſe of the ſame,* for Conſcience is the Miniſter of God to thee for good. Name a ſin which a rightly informed Conſcience does bid thee abſtain from, which is not really a miſchievous and hurtful, as well as a moral evil; and thou haſt leave to keep it. Name a duty which ſuch a Conſcience urges, which is not for thy profit, and thou ſhalt never be blamed for the omiſſion of it. What the Lord wiſhes Conſcience ſpeaks over again. Oh that there were an Heart in you, that you would fear your God, and keep all his Commandments alwayes, that it might *be well with you* forever! *Deut.* 5. 29. Conſcience aimes at this perpetually, that it may be well with you and well for

for ever with you; nay, even then when it puts you upon the ſuffering of penal evils it does deſign your good: they that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs-ſake receive *an hundred fold in this Life*, they have ſo much of grace, and of the Preſence of God, as is an hundred-fold better than any thing that's taken from them, then in the World to come they are aſſured *of everlaſting Life.*

4. Think ſeriouſly *of the deſtructiveneſs of thoſe courſes which Conſcience would hinder you from taking.* Thou art not able to hurt the Lord by thy iniquity; the Clouds are higher than thou, but He is infinitely higher than the Clouds. *If thou ſinneſt what doeſt thou againſt him?* ſays *Elihu*; *or if thy tranſgreſſions are multiplyed, what doeſt thou unto him?* Job 35. 5,6. His bleſſedneſs is ſo great, and out of the reach of any Creature, that by ſin thou art not able to diſturb it, though failing in Duty towards him thou art juſtly puniſhed: So that thou hurteſt not him, but thy ſelf by ſin. *Do they provoke me to anger, ſaith the Lord? Do they not provoke themſelves to the Confuſion of their own Faces?* Death is at the end of the broad way, ſays Conſcience, and therefore go no longer, no further in that way, but turn thy Feet into the way of Peace; If thou goeſt on ſtill in thy treſpaſſes, thy Feet really go down to Death, and thy ſteps will moſt certainly at length take hold on Hell.

5. Would you be under the Power and Authority of Conſcience? *Beg that the Lord himſelf would ſtand by, and aſſiſt this his own Officer*; and then its Authority will be Exerciſed to purpoſe: Then *ſtrong holds and Imaginations will be caſt down, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowlege of*

God, and every thought will be brought into Captivity unto the Obedience of Chriſt, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. When the under-Officer is oppoſed, an higher Magiſtrate comes with a greater force to help him in the diſcharging of his Duty. If the King himſelf with a great Military power ſhould be ready to aſſiſt a Conſtable, ſuppoſing he were reſiſted, none would then dare to withſtand. When the God of Heaven does Second and ſtrengthen Conſcience, then all within a Man bows before it, and yields unto it. As 'tis the preſence of God and his gracious concourſe that does bring Faith and Love, and other Holy habits of the Soul into powerful exerciſe, ſo 'tis this which does make Conſcience vigorouſly to do its Office. That's the Second thing implied in a good Conſcience: *The due Exerciſe of its Authority and Power.*

3. The goodneſs of Conſcience *lies in its being wakeful and attentive.* What Phyſitians ſay concerning Melancholy, that it has a tendency either to ſtupifaction or to diſtraction, may truly be affirmed concerning ſin; that it has a tendency either to ſtupifie the Conſcience, & caſt it into a deep ſleep; or to terrifie the Conſcience, and to make it even diſtracted with the ſenſe of the Lords Anger. There is a ſtrong inclination to a Lethargy in every Natural Mans Conſcience, and this Diſeaſe does grow more and more upon him. But in a good Conſcience this Diſeaſe is in a good meaſure healed, and great care is taken leſt there be a relapſe into this ſleepy ſickneſs. How often are we called upon in Scripture to Watch, *Mark* 13. *ult. What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.* Chriſt had before urged this Duty of Watching, upon his Diſciples: Here he repeats it, and extends it unto all. But watch

we

we cannot, unleſs our Eyes are open, unleſs our Conſciences are awake. Now, this wakefulneſs and attentiveneſs of Conſcience diſcovers it ſelf in theſe particulars.

1. The attentive Conſcience *eyes the Rule.* (*b*) What was ſaid of *Apollos*, may be affirmed of a good Conſcience, that 'tis mighty in the Scriptures. What is the meaning of that injunction laid upon the Children of *Iſrael*, *That they ſhould bind the words and Commands of God, for a ſign upon their hands, and that they ſhould be as frontlets between their eyes, and that they ſhould write them upon the Poſts of their Houſes, and upon their Gates*? Deut. 6. 8 9. The meaning is this, that their Conſciences ſhould always remember, and have a regard unto the Word of God: when they ſat in their Houſes, when they walked by the way, when they did lye down, and when they roſe up. *Be ye not unwiſe*, ſays the Apoſtle, *but underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is*, Eph. 5. 17. Conſcience regards not what is for our Carnal Intereſt, what is for our Credit and Reputation among the generality of Men, what is for our eaſe, and the way to ſleep in a whole skin: but it's inquiſitive, what it is that is pleaſing to God, and agreeing to his Will, and nothing that is ſo, can really be to our prejudice.

2. The attentive Conſcience *Obſerves the Perſon in whom it is*; that he may not ſwerve from, but ſquare both Heart and Life according to that Rule which is given to him. A good Conſcience has a very good Eye, and

(*b*) *In Sacris Scripturis inveniuntur illa omnia quæ continent fidem moresque vivendi.* Aug. de doc. Chriſt. l. 2. c. 9.

a very quick sight; it has an inspection upon the whole Man. It Observes what comes in at the Doors of the External Senses, and whether there be a Covenant made with the Eye, and the Ear be deaf to Vanity, and especially to all manner of sollicitations to evil. It observes how the Members are Employed, that Sin and Satan may not abuse them, and turn them into *Weapons of unrighteousness*, for then our own Members will be Weapons to destroy us. Nay, it Observes our very Hearts. Those *motus primo primi*, those very first stirrings of Corruption in the Heart will not be long unespied by a watchful Conscience. It looks with a very jealous eye upon our hearts, because they are so treacherous, and their Natural deceitfulness is but in part Cured: And its care is, that nothing may steal away our Affections from that God who does infinitely best deserve them; and that we may not be biassed by any base, carnal, low ends in any of our Actions, but that God may be *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end, *Rev.* 1. 8.

3. The attentive Conscience *takes notice of the wiles and devices of the evil One*. It very well remembers how *the Serpent beguiled our first Parents through its subtilty*; and therefore keeps a strict Guard against that Adversary. It furnishes us with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, whereby we may repell Satan in his Assaults. Does he tempt to Pride? Conscience says, It's Written, *God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble*: 1 Pet. 5. 5. Does he tempt to Covetousness? Conscience says, 'tis written, *Covetousness is Idolatry, and for this things sake the wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Disobedience*, Col. 3. 5, 6. Does he tempt to injustice? Conscience says, 'tis written, *Let no Man go beyond, or defraud*

defraud his Brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, 1 Thes. 4. 6. Does he tempt to Uncleanness? Conscience says, 'tis written, *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will Judge*; and *no Whoremonger nor unclean Person hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God,* Eph. 5. 5. An attentive Conscience meets Satan at every turn, and is a very great Defence against him, for it directs us to God, in whom our strength lies, and to the Armour of God, *which being put on, we shall stand against the wiles of the Devil,* Eph. 6. 11.

4. The attentive Conscience *heeds the Spirit of the Lord in his Holy Motions and Suggestions.* There are two ways whereby the Spirit of God may be known, *He glorifies Christ,* and *he leads to Holiness: He glorifies Christ,* John. 16. 14. *He,* that is the Spirit of Truth, *shall glorifie me,* says Christ, *for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Those that talk of the Spirit, and trample Christ under foot, and count his Blood a common thing, certainly are guided by a false Spirit: the Holy Ghost always glorifies Christ, Teaches that he is the onely Redeemer and Mediator, by whom we have access to God, and that we could never have had admission into the Holiest of all, but by his Blood; and whatever Benefits we receive, they are the Fruit of his purchase. And as the Spirit Glorifies Christ, so he *leads to Holiness,* therefore he is called πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης, *the Spirit of Holiness,* Rom. 1. 4. When the Spirit accompanies Ordinances or Providences, and we find in our selves more than Ordinary strivings to purge us from what does pollute us, and strong endeavours used to perswade us unto a thorow-Sanctification. Conscience takes Notice of the Spirits Operation, and bids us to

yield to him, and by no means to thwart and grieve him.

If now you demand, how Conſcience may be made thus attentive? I Anſwer,

1. *Deafen your Ears againſt perſwaſions to evil.* *Adam* hearkned to Satan, we have been the more apt to hearken to him ever ſince, and not to regard our own Conſciences. If you heed not Conſcience, Conſcience may at length not heed you; if your Ears are open to the Tempter, and deaf to Conſcience, Conſcience may at length be dumb to you, and ſuffer you to go your own way.

2. *Cumber not your ſelves about many things.* (c) While *Martha* was cumbred about much Serving, Conſcience was not ſo attentive as it ſhould have been to the Word of Chriſt; therefore Chriſt prefers *Mary* before *Martha*, for ſhe *ſat at his Feet and heard his Word*, and according as Conſcience was perſwaded it was her Duty and Intereſt, ſhe minded *the One thing needful*, and *made choice of that better part, which could not be taken away from her*, Luke 10. 39, 42.

3. *Pray that the Lord would open your hearts.* When *Lydia's* heart was *Opened*, then *ſhe attended to what was ſpoken by the Apoſtle Paul*, Acts 16. 14. The Seeing Eye, and the Hearing Ear, the Lord has made even both of them. Beg that he would throughly

(c) *Fœlix qui potuit boni,*
Fontem viſere lucidum.
Fœlix, qui potuit gravis,
Terræ ſolvere vincula.
Boetius de Conſolat. Philoſ. met. 12. pag. 136.

awaken

awaken Conſcience, and keep it awake Scoffers do ſay, that we do make *Prayer* a Drug in all our prescripts. I confeſs we do ſo, and are not aſhamed of it; to Pray, is to call in the help of the great Phyſitian, without whom all means that are uſed muſt needs be ineffectual for our Cure. Every good gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights; and therefore Conſcience can be made to ſee, and to be attentive by no other. Thus of that Third particular, *The goodneſs of Conſcience lies in its being Watchful and attentive.*

4. The goodneſs of Conſcience *lies in its tenderneſs.* A great deal of tenderneſs there is in the World: how tender are many in points of Honour! They cannot put up any thing that looks like an Affront, but demand ſatisfaction: their hearts riſe againſt any that ſtand in their Light, or leſſen their Repute; nay, ſome are ſo tender of their Fame, that they will venture even Life it ſelf to ſecure it. How tender are others of their Eſtates, they will part with their Eyes almoſt as ſoon as part with their Wealth: Their Gold is their Confidence and their God. Others are tender of their Relations, Wives, Children; how careful are they that no harm befall them, and eſpecially of their own Fleſh they are tender; the Body can lack nothing, but many ſollicitous thoughts are ſpent about it, for its ſupply, and if it be in any danger, for its ſecurity. But all this while where ſhall we find any tenderneſs of Conſcience? Some do look upon this as an Argument of a mean Spirit, others fancy this tenderneſs to be needleſs, and that it onely betrays want of wit, and will be prejudicial to our Intereſt. But certainly ſince God is ſo tender of his Honour and Authority, and

ſince

ſince he will ſo ſeverely puniſh them that break his Commandments: Conſcience cannot be over tender in this matter; we are truly the more wiſe, the more tender we are. Some do think, the *Engliſh* word *Righteous*, is derived from *Right-wiſe*. I am ſure the Righteous Man is the right wiſe Man: he whoſe Conſcience is ſtupid, is in the worſt ſence fool-hardy.

The tender Conſcience has theſe enſuing Properties whereby its tenderneſs may be known.

1. The tender Conſcience *is afraid of Secret ſins as well as Open; of heart-ſins, as well as thoſe which appear in the Converſation.* Open ſins are worſe than Secret in this regard, becauſe of ſcandal; but in ſecret ſins there is a more fixed reſolution many times againſt Reformation. When ſin retires to the Heart, and is not ſo much taken Notice of by any breaking forth in the Practice, its ſtrength may be greateſt, juſt as an Oven, unto which Wicked Mens hearts are compared, *Hoſ.* 7. 7. is then hotteſt when 'tis ſtop'd cloſeſt. Sin may Reign moſt abſolutely in the Heart, which is its Throne when 'tis not at all diſcerned by the Eye of others. Thus 'tis ſaid of the *Perſian* Kings, that none were more abſolute Monarchs, and yet they were very ſeldom ſeen by the People. (*d*) A tender Conſcience is afraid of open ſin, becauſe hereby the way of Truth may come to be evil ſpoken of; 'tis afraid of ſecret alſo, becauſe as theſe when they prevail do commonly abound more in Number; ſo beſides, the Lord, who is moſt offended at them, is privy to them. O the Fooliſh contempt of God, when his Eye is deſpiſed,

(d) *Apud Perſas Perſona Regis ſub ſpecie Majeſtatis occultur* Juſtin. *lib.* 1.

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and onely Mans is feared. God hates sin ten thousand times more than Man can hate it, and can likwise inflict ten thousand times a greater punishment. *Solomon* tells us, the Lord requires the Heart, *Prov.* 23. 26. *My Son, give me thy Heart*: a tender Conscience dares not allow sin so much as a Lodging there, though it seem content never to shew its Face abroad.

2. A tender Conscience *is afraid of little sins as well as great.* As Camels are not swallowed, so Gnats are strained at: (e) Little sins are great enough, if unrepented of, to undo the sinner; there is no sin so little, but there is a need of the Blood of Jesus to make an attonement for it. When we speak of the degrees of sin, we should think of the degrees of torment in Hell: though some places in Hell are hotter than others, yet none are cool; those that are least of all tormented, shall be tormented for ever, and shall have no cause to brag of ease. So, though some sins are more evil and hainous than others, yet there are none but what are very bad, and if made light of, will prove heavy enough to sink the Soul into condemnation. A tender Conscience is perswaded of all this, and does not cry concerning any sin, Is it not a little one? A little Leak in a Ship is feared and stop'd; a little fire in an undue place is feared, and quenched; a little sin by a tender Conscience is not allowed, but mortified. Little sins are not without their peculiar Aggravation, for we stand

(e) *Quicquid nunc parvi pendendo transimus, palpando regimus, dissimulando negligimus, quanto illic cruciatu vindex flamma consumet? Utinam magis nunc daret quis capiti meo aquas, & oculis meis fontem lachrimarum, fortè enim non reperiret ignis exurens, quid interim fluens lachryma diluisset.* Bern. *de Dil. Deo.* p. mihi 408.

with

with God in a ſmall matter; this Argues great careleſsneſs and neglect of him. And hence that ſaying holds true. *Quò levius mandatum eò gravius peccatum.* The eaſier the Command, the more is the tranſgreſſion aggravated.

3. A tender Conſcience *is afraid of the Occaſions of Evil*; it knows very well how vehement the bent of corrupted Nature is; and upon this ſcore 'tis unwilling we ſhould come where there is forbidden Fruit, leſt, that Fruit be luſted after, and then eaten. He that ventures upon Occaſions of ſin, 'tis a ſign that there is a ſecret hankering after it, and then no wonder if he fall into it; or at leaſt, that he has high thoughts of his own ſtrength to withſtand any Temptation; and ſuch ſelf-confidence is ordinarily puniſhed by Divine withdrawings, and then to be ſure Temptation will be prevalent. *Peter* cryed out, *though all men ſhould be offended becauſe of thee, yet will I never be offended*; and afterwards, *though I ſhould dye with thee, yet will I not deny thee*, Mat. 26. 33. 35. He unadviſedly follows Chriſt to the High-Prieſts Palace, and being there, his ſinful fear diſcovers it ſelf, he denies his Maſter, to ſecure himſelf; he denies him thrice, and that with a Curſe and Oath that he never knew him, *verſe* 74. See what became of all his Confidence. A tender Conſcience is always accompanied with ſelf-diffidence, and cauſes us upon this ſcore to keep far off from what is evil. *God putteth no truſt in his Servants, yea, his Angels he chargeth with folly*; ſurely then we have Reaſon to diſtruſt our ſelves. *Enter not into the way of the Wicked*, ſays *Solomon*, *go not in the path of Evil Men, avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it, and paſs away*, Prov. 4. 14, 15. All Occaſions of ſin are heedfully to be avoided. Tender Conſcienced *Joſeph*, as he hearkned not to his Miſtreſs,

fires, so he cared not *to be with her*, Gen. 39. 10. He thought it was not good to come too neer that fire, (so a naughty Woman is set forth, *Prov.* 6. 27.) for fear at last he might catch some heat.

4. A tender Conscience *if it suspect any thing to be sin it will forbear, till satisfied.* 'Tis better a great deal not to go to the utmost bounds of Christian liberty then to go beyond it; better an indifferent thing should be abstained from as unlawful, than that which is really unlawful should be ventured upon as if it were indifferent. The Israleites when newly planted in *Canaan*, were so tender that when they did but suspect, that the *Reubenites*, and *Gadites*, and half Tribe of *Manasseh*, had built an alter for Burnt-Offerings, they they presently come out against them; for as there is but one Mediator, so there was to be but one Altar for Burnt-Offerings, namely, That which was made by Gods own appointment, *Josh* 22. This unsatisfiedness concerning some things, which yet we cannot peremptorily pronounce to be sinful, is I grant an argument of infirmity and weakness in the Conscience; but truly 'tis *bonum signum ex malâ causâ* a good sign from a bad cause, it argues a true fear of sin; when not only all known sin, but that which is suspected to be so, is eschewed.

A tender Conscience is not bold and venturous, 'tis afraid of Errours in Judgement, as well as wickedness in practise. As Malice and Wickedness is compared unto leaven, 1 *Cor.* 5. 8. so likewise errour and false Doctrine, *Mat.* 16 12. *Then understood they how that he bad them beware, not of the leaven of Bread but of the Doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadduces.* Since Errour is like unto Leaven; is of an insinuating and spreading Nature, and Christ himself sayes *Beware*; no wonder if a tender Conscience be cautious, and flies from

from those who publish divers and strange Doctrines. 'Twas a notable saying of *Augustine*, (*f*) *That the liberty of Errour is the Souls death.*

5. A tender *Conscience takes notice of Gods anger while it hangs in the threatnings, and before that anger break forth, urges unto deep humiliation.* Thus *Josiahs heart was tender and he did humble himself before God*, when he heard his words denounced against *Jerusalem*, and the inhabitants thereof, and did rend his Clothes and wept before the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 34. 27. A tender *Conscience* is not satisfied unless contrition be true, such as God calls by that Name; and such as he has promised *reviving* to, *Esaiah* 57. 15. 'tis not satisfied unless the Heart be rent as well as the Garment, and be broken off from sin, as well as broken for it. Oh how will a tender *Conscience* bring sins to Remembrance! 'twill lay on load and not spare, to this end that Christ may be prized who alone can give rest. *David* cryes out *Innumerable evils have compassed me about, my Iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up, they are more then the hairs of my Head, therefore my Heart faileth me*, Psal. 40. 12. and then he adds ver. 13. *Be pleased O Lord to deliver me, O Lord make haste to help me.*

6. A tender *Conscience* is *afraid of casting any of Gods Commands behind the back, but presses a re-*

(*f*) *Quæ est enim peior mors animæ quam libertas erroris! omnes pacem quam omnis doctus & indoctus intelligit præponendam esse discordiæ, diligamus & teneamus unitatem. Hoc jubent Imperatores quod jubet & Christus quia cum bonum jubent, per illos non jubet nisi Christus.* Aug. Epist. 166 ad Donat.

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spect unto all the Lords precepts. David was truly tender when he said, *I esteem all thy Commandements concerning all things to be right, Oh that my ways were directed that I might keep thy Statues! then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy Commandements, Psal.* 119. 5, 6. 128. 'Tis said concerning *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, *that they were both Righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless, Luke* 1. 5, 6. A tender *Conscience* bids us eye such copies as these; and write after them. No Ordinance of Gods institution, but God is ready to own it, and to be found in it, if he be sought in a due order; and therefore no Ordinance is to be neglected. To live in the omission of any duty which God has Commanded, is to cut off a golden pipe whereby Grace may be conveyed to us; and herein we do not consult our own good.

You see how the tenderness of *Conscience* discovers itself. But the great question will be, *How may Conscience be made thus tender*? surely a question needful to be resolved. For tender *Consciences* where are they to be found? stupidness of Soul is an Epedimicall malady 'tis the disease of the Age, and the nearer the world approaches to its end, the more is this Disease likely to prevail. For such a security will go before the burning of the World at the last day, as went before the drowning of it in the dayes of *Noah*. The profane among us have so much lost, that they laugh at tenderness of *Conscience*. Multitudes of professors, their *Consciences* can swallow almost any thing: they can live in pleasures, and care about the World more then about the better part, they can fulfil their fleshly lusts, and yet *Conscience* is so wretchedly blind and dumb that at present it does not disquiet them. Nay the

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Wiſe Virgins themſelves ſlumber. Believers many of them have loſt their firſt tenderneſs; and therefore more then we are aware of are concerned in this queſtion, *How may a Conſcience be made tender?* I anſwer.

1. *Study better the Nature of Sin.* I will boldly ſay that a ſtupid *Conſcience* knows not what ſin is; if once 'twere underſtood; it could not poſſibly be made light of. All that are hardned in ſin, are deceived by it. Therefore the Apoſtle gives that caution, Heb. 3. 13. *Exhort one another daily while it is called to day leſt any of you be hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* As God is an incomprehenſible good, ſo ſin is an incomprehenſible evil. (g) No Creature can fully underſtand it: onely God, who knows how good himſelf is, knows how evil ſin is; which is directly oppoſite and contrary to him. But though we cannot ſound the bottom of this evil, no more then we can dig to the Earths Centre: yet much is diſcovered by the VVord of God. Sin is worſe then the Devil, for it made him a Devil. Take ſin from the Devil, he will be a glorious Angel: if ſin get into a glorious Angel 'twil turn him into a Devil preſently. Sin will make us like the Devil if we go on in it, and bring us into the ſame ſtate of unalterable miſery.

(g) *Philoſophers have meaſured mountains,*
Fathom'd the depth of Seas of States, and Kings;
Walkt with a ſtaff to heaven, traced fountains:
But there are two vaſt, ſpacious things,
The which to meaſure it doth more behove,
Yet few there are that ſound them; Sin, and Love.
Hebert. *Agony.* pag. 29.

But

But let us view sin a little with relation to God. 'Tis a daring of his Power and Presence, a bold challenging of the Almighty to do his worst. 'Tis an affront of his Majesty; a casting off of his Authority; *Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us*, Psal. 2. 3. 'Tis a robbing him of his Glory, which is so dear to him, and which he is so unwilling to give to another. 'Tis a slighting of his Goodness, which is so vast and large that it should attract the Love and Hearts of all; and which alone can satisfie and be beatifical to the Soul of Man. 'Tis an injury to his Justice, contrary to his Holiness, denies his Truth, makes him a Liar, for neither Promises nor Threatnings are believed. Nay, Sin strikes at the very Being of God: for if hating our Brother be murthering of him, Ah! what is hatred of God to be called? No wonder that the Lord is so angry at sin, and turns those that will by no means turn from it, into Hell; and makes them for ever to bewail their Rebellion against him. If Sin were but rightly understood, Conscience would be tender of offending; we should not dare to be so venturous upon so great an evil. Would you grieve for sin? cry out, *What have I done?* would you be tender and afraid to sin, when tempted; say, *What am I about to do?* how much shall I do against God? how much shall I wrong my own Soul?

2. That Conscience may be tender, *see him that is invisible*. *Moses* did thus by the eye of Faith, and this made him so tender, *that he refused to be called the son of* Pharoahs *Daughter: he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of* Egypt, *and chose rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin which are but for a season*, Heb. 11. 24. 27. The thoughts of

God, do disturb the stupid Conscience; therefor wicked men care not to speak, or hear, or think him. But Believers endeavour to imitate *David* who said, *I have set the Lord always before me*; and this makes and keeps Conscience very tender. Look up often to God, and the frequent viewing of him will encrease both Fear and Love. *David* having studied well the Omni presence of God, and perceived that in every place God was perpetually by him; he desires to have his heart and thoughts searched, and tried, and every wicked way in him discovered, and Conscience is so tender, that he dares and cares to go in no way but the way that is everlasting, *Psal.* 139. 23, 24.

See God in every ordinance; then Conscience will tell you he is jealous about his worship, that he is a *Great King*; and hath said, *Cursed be the deceiver, who having a male in his flock, voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing*, Mal. 1. 14. See God in every providence; then Conscience will tell you, that mercies are not to be abused, nor consumed upon your lusts; and that afflictions are sent to take away your Sin. See God in every Temptation; how easily then will Conscience silence the Tempter, by telling him, 'tis not safe to provoke the Lord to his very face; 'tis not wisdom to forfeit his Favour, to incurr his anger, for such poor things as Satan offers; his greatest offers are but poor; and oh how far does the Lord outbid him!

3. That Conscience may be tender, *Bewail the stupidness of it, and cry to have it cured.* Follow God with restless importunity; *Lord enlighten my eyes and awaken my Conscience, lest I sleep the sleep of death.* He will be angry with you if you should think that you can

cure

cure your selves of this malady; you cannot please this Physician better than to make use of him. You have great encouragement to seek unto him; for he has expressly said, *A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the Heart of Stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an Heart of flesh*, Ezek. 36. 26. The stone in the heart and the stupidness of the Conscience are diseases near a kin; nay the one does include the other: a stony Heart implies a senseless Conscience, and an Heart of flesh a Tender-conscience. Hope in this word of Promise; He is faithful that has made it: Never any yet have found the Lord backward to heal, that were indeed weary of their Distempers.

4. That Conscience may be tender, *Eye the examples of Saints whose tenderness in Scripture is commended.* How tender was *Joseph!* though his Mistress tempted him, and he a Servant; though he was a young man, and Single; though opportunity offered it self, and there was a great probability of secrecy in reference to his Master; though he was likely to be accused of an attempt to Ravish, if he did not consent to commit Adultery, and hereby his Masters rage might endanger his life; Yet Conscience was so tender that he did not dare to do so great a wickedness. O *Joseph* though thou hadst a beautiful outside, yet thy inside, thy Heart was much more amiable! How tender was *Job*, there was none like him in the Earth: he feared God and eschewed evil: and throughout *chap.* 31. you may read with what care and Conscience he Eschewed it. He was so watchful against uncleanness that *he made a Covenant with his eyes*; he was so just, that he did not *despise the cause of his own Servants.* He was so Merciful, that he carried him-

ſelf like a *Father to the Poor*, and *like a guide* and Husband *to the Widdow*. He was ſo free from revenge, that *he rejoyced not at the deſtruction of him that hated him, neither did he lift up himſelf when enemy found him*.

Unto theſe Scripture inſtances I ſhall add another concerning one of the Fathers. (k) He that writes the life of *Anſelmn*, relates this paſſage, and uſhers it in with this Preface. *My Conſcience bears me witness that I lye not.* He *feared nothing in the World more than to ſin. We have often heard him profeſs that if on the one hand he ſhould ſee the horrour of ſin, and on the other the pains of Hell, and muſt neceſſarily be plunged into one of the two; he would chuſe Hell rather than ſin.* Another thing alſo which may ſeem no leſs wonderful he was wont to ſay, *He had rather be in Hell being innocent and free from ſin, than being defiled and polluted poſſeſs the Kingdom of Heaven.* This tenderneſs of others may make us wonder at our ſelves, and if ſeriouſly conſidered, might be a means, to prevent our making ſo bold with ſin any more; 'tis not good to dally with Divine wrath, nor to play with Hell fire.

5. That Conſcience may be tender, *avoid every thing that is of a ſtupifying Nature*. Whatever does defile

(h) *Nihil in mundo quantum peccare timebat. Sæpe illum veracis teſtimonio profitentem audivimus, Quod ſi hinc peccatum horrorem; hinc inferni dolorem corporaliter cerneret, & necesse eorum immergi deberet: prius infernum quàm peccatum adiret. Aliud quoque non minus forſan aliquibus mirum, dicebat, viz. malle ſe purum à peccato, & innocentem gehennam habere, quàm peccati ſorde pollutum cœlorum regna tenere.* De Anſel. l. 2. *in Oper.* Anſelm.

apt to harden. Sins againſt knowledge that are committed preſumptuouſly, how do they waſte the Conſcience! when Satan can draw us to theſe, he gives us ſuch a blow as ſtuns us. *David* after his folly with *Bathſheba*, how ſtupid was he! after he had defiled the Wife how ſtrangely did he carry it towards *Uriah* the Husband! And thus ſtupid he does continue, till *Nathan* the Prophet is ſent to ſtartle him. One would have thought that aſſoon as ever the Prophet propoſed the parable of the Ew-lamb, that *Davids* Conſcience ſhould have made application, but it was ſo ſtupid that it did not, till *Nathan* deals plainly with him for his ſin and his ingratitude. Oh let every one cry out, *Keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous ſins, let not them have Dominion over me, Pſal.* 19. 13.

6. That Conſcience may be tender, *Remember how ſmarting ſin has been to others.* See how it has put others upon the wrack, that you may grow wiſe by their harms. What made *Paſhur* to have his name changed to *Magormiſſabib*, but becauſe ſin made him a terrour to himſelf and to all that were round about him. 'Twas ſin brought *Cain* to ſuch a condition, that he cryed out, *my puniſhment is greater than I can bear*, Gen. 4. 13. Nay how have the Saints themſelves been wounded by Sin, and groaned under the burden of it. *My ſore ran in the Night*, ſayes the Pſalmiſt, *my Soul refuſed to be comforted, I remembred God and was troubled, I complained and my Spirit was overwhelmed, Selah.* Pſal. 77. 2, 3. So Pſal. 88. 7. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou haſt afflicted me with all thy Waves.* Hark how the Prophet *Jeremiah* cryes out in the Name of the Church; *I am the man that hath ſeen affliction by the Rod of his wrath, he hath brought me into darkneſs; he turneth his hand againſt me all*

the day; he hath hedged me about that I cannot get ou
he hath made my chain heavy; also when I cry and sho
he shutteth out my Prayer: He was unto me as
bear lying in wait, as a Lyon in secret places; he hat
filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken wi
Worm-wood. Oh let Conscience think of this dark
ness, and chaine, and gall, and VVormwood, whi
are the dismal effects of sin, and so be afraid
it.

7. That Conscience may be tender, *Let Dea
and Judgement be still within view.* I am perswade
that was one reason why wickedness and security wa
so great in the old VVorld, because it being ordinar
for men to live seven or eight, or nine hundred ye
they did banish the thoughts of their latter end: b
be you wise to consider it. The Apostle *Paul* pr
fesses concerning himself: *I dye daily*, 1 Cor. 15. 31
that is, he did not only dye more to sin and to the Wo
every day, but he continually lookt upon himself as mo
tal, and at no time did he grow secure as if he were
of the reach of Death. It argued some tenderness in
Consciences of the * *Egyptians* of old, whose custo
it was at the end of their Banquets to bring in the Im
of a dead carcass made of Wood, and to carry it abo
unto the guests, and to say, Εἰς τοῦτον ὁρῶν πῖνε καὶ τέρ
ἔσεαι γὰρ ἀποθανὼν τοιοῦτος *Look unto this when thou d
Feasting, for after thou art Dead thou shalt be like it.*
the Lord did but teach you (and teach you he would
you were desirous to learn) that holy Arithmeti
whereby you might be able to *number your days*
right, you would apply your Hearts unto Wisdo

* Herodot. l. 2.

Pſal. 90. 12. Death would have a mighty influence upon your Conſciences, eſpecially if that which follows after judgement, were believingly conſidered. Conſcience would ſtop thee when about to ſin, if it ask thee, and thou doſt think of theſe two queſtions ſeriouſly: *If I ſin, when I come to dye will it not be matter of trouble to me? When I am judged how ſhall I anſwer for it?* many Conſciences awake at Death, all muſt needs awake at Judgment, the Meditation of Death and Judgment would help much to awake them immediately.

8. That Conſcience may be tender, *meditate much upon Eternity.* Our Thoughts may endeavour to reach Eternity, but they are quickly ſwallowed up and loſt in the vaſtneſs of it. Eternity is the word of all others that has an awakening ſound. What is not to be done and ſuffered for, the obtaining of *Eternal Joyes?* How weak ſhould all arguments be to perſwade us to that which will bring us to *ETERNAL Woes?* O Conſcience! get this word into thy Mouth, and be alwayes ringing it in ſinners Ears. Eternity! Eternity! then thou thy ſelf wilt be more tender, and wilt alſo bear the greater ſway. O tell all that *time is ſhort and the faſhion of this world paſſes away,* 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30. and that 'tis madneſs (which nothing can be an Hyperbole to ſet forth) when they *may be happy for ever,* not to conſent to their own happineſſe; and when they are *warned to flee from Everlaſting miſery,* willfully to throw themſelves into it. Thus of that fourth particular, the goodneſs of Conſcience lies *in the tenderneſs of it.*

5. The goodneſs of Conſcience *lies in its faithfulneſs*

ness in Witness-bearing. As we are not to bear false Witness concerning our Neighbour, so neither ought Conscience to bear false witness concerning our selves. Conscience must not be like *Fame*; *Tam falsi pravior, tenax, quam nuncia veri.* Speaking more Ordinarily what is feigned, than what is true. God, whose Officer Conscience is, is a God of Truth, and the Word, which is given for its Direction, is the Word of Truth; and if that Conscience Flatter us, it will but injure us; if it deal Faithfully, though it speak never so terribly, it may do us a great kindness. You must know that a good Conscience may *Accuse* as well as *Excuse*. It Accuses indeed of evil, but 'tis not evil that it does Accuse, (i) but a part of its Duty; and truly this is Necessary unto our Humiliation and Amendment.

1. The Accusations of a good Conscience are just, sin is the ground of those Accusations; and the better the Conscience is, the more immediately there will be a smiting of the heart, after the prevailing of a Temptation. Thus *David*'s heart *quickly smote him after he had numbred the People, and he said, I have sinned greatly in that I have done, and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the Iniquity of thy Servant, for I have done very Foolishly,* 2 Sam. 24. 10. And when a good Conscience Accuses, 'tis not easily satisfied; 'twill not be quiet till there be a confession of sin before

(i) *Neque magis vitio verti potuit conscientiæ postea, cùm juste accusavit & condemnavit, quàm ipsi legi & Judici summo quidem fecit post ingressum peccati; non ante. Tantum vero abest conscientiæ accusatio justa ab omni justâ reprehensione, ut a peccatoribus imprimis requiratur, tanquam unica via de peccatis admissis agendi pœnitentiam,* Ames. *De Conscien.* l. 1. c. 12.

God,

God, a loathing of it, and pardon and healing are obtained through our Lord Jeſus. While *David kept ſilence*, that is, refuſed ingenuouſly to confeſs his fault, his Conſcience was clamorous, *and his Bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long; and his moiſture was turned into the drought of Summer*, Pſal. 32. 3,4. but at length he has Peace, *v.* 5. *I acknowledged my ſin unto thee, and my Iniquity have I not hid, I ſaid, I will confeſs my tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the Iniquity of my ſin*, Selah.

2. And as the Accuſations of a good Conſcience are juſt, ſo it will *Excuſe, if there be good Reaſon for it.* It will call Grace, Grace, if it be true, though it be but weak. God does not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, neither ought Conſcience. It ought not by taking notice onely of ſin, and over-looking the Spirits work in the Soul, to go about to break the bruiſed Reed, and quench the ſmoaking Flax. It muſt be granted that Believers Conſciences do bring in a falſe Teſtimony againſt them at ſome ſeaſons; and they make bold to call themſelves Hypocrites, and to affirm that there is nothing in them but what may be found in Reprobates. But this is no part of Conſciences goodneſs, and they are to be reproved; becauſe upon every light ground they are ſo apt to queſtion their Eſtate, and to rank themſelves among the Hypocrites; in doing thus they gratifie Satan exceedingly, and hinder their own Edification, becauſe they are ever queſtioning whether the Foundation be rightly laid; and God has little or no thanks from them, though in giving them the leaſt meaſure of ſaving Grace, he has done more for them, than if he had put Scepters into their hands, and Crowns of pure Gold upon their Heads.

But you will ask, how may Conscience be made thus Faithful in its Testimony? I Answer,

1. If you would have Conscience bear witness truly, *neither add unto, nor diminish from the Word of God.* Call not those, Sins, which are not transgressions of his Laws; and call not those, Duties, which he never commanded. God has so fully revealed his mind in his Word, that whatever is not expresly contained in it, or by firm consequence deducible from it, Conscience is not to take notice of, either as Truth or Duty. Look not into false Glasses, which Satan will be apt to set before you. The Scripture is the true Glass, and 'tis the thankful Glass too, which mends the eyes of them that look into it.

2. *Look well into your selves*; be willing to take notice of the evil in you as well as the good (and which is needful to be added for the sake of humbled Souls) be willing to Observe that good which God has wrought in you, as well as the evil which you labour under.

3. Let it be your earnest request at the Throne of Grace, *that your own Hearts may not deceive you.* As Satan is a lying Spirit, so your own Spirits are false to you, and are ready to joyn with him. God is able to discover you unto your selves; though the Heart be so deceitful above all things, that the Prophet crys out, who can know it? *Yet the Lord searcheth the Heart, and tryeth the Reins*, Jer. 17. 10.

4. *Be willing that Conscience should speak truth, whether that truth make for you or against you*: That was a bad temper of *Ahab*, who hated *Micajah, because he Prophesied not good concerning him, but evil,*

1 Kings

1 Kings 22. 8, and because he could not endure to hear of Evil, at length he feels it, and there was no Remedy: When Conscience does speak most against you, in some Respects, 'tis for you; because whatever you ail, there is a Remedy provided in the Gospel. To know the truth of your Condition if it be bad, does not make it worse, but is one good step unto the alteration of it for the better. That's the Fifth thing, *A good Conscience is Faithful in Witness-bearing.*

6. The goodness of Conscience *lies in the purity of it.* Nothing in the Soul of Man can be said to be good, in a Scripture-sence, unless purged; for as the whole Soul is Corrupted by Nature, so renovation in the whole is needful; our Understandings are not good till Sanctified; *to depart from evil is Understanding*: our Affections are not good, till cleansed; our Consciences are not good, till purged. I do not, I dare not affirm, that this purity of Conscience in this Life is so compleat, as to exclude all manner of defilement: in this sence, *who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* Prov. 20. 9. But that which the Gospel accounts purity of Conscience, lies in these particulars:

1. Where the Conscience is pure, *no sin is concealed or covered.* If we cover sin, God will not cover it; we shall not be of the Number of those Blessed ones, whose Transgressions are forgiven, whose Iniquities are covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute sin. A pure Conscience therefore, without any guile or reservation, confesses all before God; and as it confesses all it knows, so 'tis willing to know more, that more may be acknowledged and bewailed. *Job*, among other

other Arguments, uses this, and 'twas a strong one, to prove the purity of his Conscience; *that he had not covered his Transgression as* Adam, *by hiding his Iniquity in his Bosom,* Job 31. 33. He that conceals a Thief, sides with him; and he that hides sin, 'tis a sign his heart is not turned from it. A pure Conscience is free and open, does not mince or extenuate, but aggravate Iniquity: It can appeal to God concerning its unwillingness to conceal any of his Enemies (for Mens Lusts are Gods Enemies, and their own too) and it can challenge Satan to Name a sin which 'tis not ready to acknowledge.

2. When the Conscience is pure, *every sin is hated.* Hatred is never better placed than upon sin. Our Brother is not to be hated; nay, we are forbid to hate our Enemy: but sin we may hate without sparing. *David* tells us, that *through Gods Precepts he got Understanding, therefore he hated every false way,* Psal. 119. 104. By the Word his Conscience was Informed and Sanctified, and this Universal Hatred of sin followed. Hatred is an Affection which aims at Destruction, and when 'tis high 'tis against the whole kind. Thus *Haman* hated *Mordecai, and thought it scorn to lay hands on* Mordecai *alone, but sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole Kingdom of* Ahasuerus, *even the People of* Mordecai, *Esth.* 3. 6. The pure Conscience strikes at the whole kind of sin: (*k*) wherever 'tis, whether in the Mind, in the Will, in the Af-

(*k*) *Est intentio Odii, nocere; nec cessat in lasione peccati, sed in exterminio: verè pœnitens juratus est in mortem peccatorum.* Guil. Parisiensi. *De Rhetor. divin.* c. 23.

fections,

sections, in Word, in the Actions. What *Moses* speaks concerning Idolatry, it does apply unto all sin, *Deut.* 7. 26. *Thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a cursed thing.*

3. When the Conscience is pure, *The whole Image of God is desired*, and that the Soul may be like unto him in all things, wherein 'tis its Duty to resemble him. What the Moral Philosophers say concerning the Moral Vertues, that they are *inter se concatenatæ*, that they are linked together, holds certainly true concerning those Graces which are wrought by the Spirit of God; they are so linked together, that you cannot have one in truth but you must have all in some measure. This is a sweet Truth to a pure Conscience, for all Grace is longed after. Therefore Christ's fulness is eyed, and prized, and application is made to him, *that out of that fulness we may receive, and Grace for Grace*, John 1. 16. That is, that we may receive Graces answerable to those Graces which Christ has received of his Father for us: Thus the Wax does receive Character for Character from the Seal, and the Child Member for Member from the Father, though not of the same bigness and proportion. The pure Conscience is not double minded, 'tis not partly for God, and partly for *Mammon*; partly for Christ, and partly for Satan. But this is the desire that the God of all Grace, would work every Grace in Truth, and make all Grace more and more to abound.

4. When the Conscience is pure, *the Mystery of Faith is held fast*: The Apostle joyns Faith and a good Conscience together, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. *Holding Faith and a good Conscience, which some having put away, concerning Faith, have made ship-wrack.* And 1 *Tim.* 3. 9.

9. *Holding the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience.* Whoever are truly purified, do prize the Gospel and the Mysteries of it; they admire the contrivance of Mans Redemption by Christ Jesus, and are perswaded since his Blood is the *Blood of God*, that 'tis sufficient to purchase lost Souls, and to purchase the lost Inheritance. The Mystery of Regeneration they are acquainted with, and the absolute Necessity of it. And though Justification by the Imputed Righteousness of Christ be Argued against, as absurd, by deluded Papists, and their wretched followers; though the work of the Spirit in renewing & changing of the Heart, be derided by Profane Wits; nay, by some that would be accounted Masters in *Israel*; A pure Conscience notwithstanding retains these Mysteries. Thus the Church of *Pergamus*, though *they dwelt where Satans Seat was, yet they held fast Christs Name, and did not deny his Faith, and that even in those days wherein the Faithful Martyr* Antipas *was slain among them*, Rev. 2. 13.

5. Where Conscience is pure, *God is Served in sincerity, and there is a willingness to live honestly.* The Apostle tells us, that he *Served God from his Fore-Fathers with a pure Conscience*, 2 Tim. 1. 3. he did not Preach a new God, but the same which *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and all the Prophets were the Servants of. This God he Served with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind; his Conscience did bear him witness, that his very Soul was engaged in the Lords Work; and that he was very well pleased both with his Master, and with that business which his Master had Employed him in: and they were not his own things, but the things of his Lord which were sought by him. And as a pure Conscience engages to the Service of God,

God, so to the living honestly, Heb. 13. 18. *We trust we have a good Conscience in all things, willing to live honestly.* Where such a Conscience is, that of the Apostle is heeded, Rom. 13. 12, 13. *The night is far spent, the day is at hand,* that is; the present time (which is compared to the night because most are asleep in it, and much wickedness lies hid and is not yet disclosed) the present time is far spent; is almost come to an end; and the day is at Hand, that is, the day of Judgement when all secrets will be brought to Light; *Let us therefore cast off the works of Darkness and let us put on the Armour of Light, let us walk honestly as in the day, not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in strife and Envying, and make no Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

6. Where Conscience is pure, *a greater measure of Holiness is aspired unto, and endeavoured after.* Though sin does remain in a sanctified Heart, yet does it not remain quietly, Conscience deals hardly with it, as *Sarah* did with *Hagar, Abrahams Egyptian* Concubine, and is not satisfied, till 'tis turned out of doors: though Grace is incompleat, yet compleatness is desired, the promises of Sanctification are lookt upon as very great and precious, and they are pleaded; that the Divine Nature, may more and more be partaken of by them, & the Corruption that is in the world through lust more fully escaped. A pure Conscience will not suffer us to rest in that Grace which is already attained, but causes us to presse towards the mark: and *to cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God,* 2 *Cor.* 7. 1.

But now it is to be inquired, How Conscience may be made thus pure? unto which I answer.

1. *The*

1. *The Word of God is like a fire to purifie, Jer.* 23. 29. *Is not my Word like Fire saith the Lord? and like an Hammer that breaketh the Rock in pieces?* the word is compared to an Hammer, because as the hammer does break the Rock, so does the Word the Heart, though never so hard and senseless; 'tis compared also to fire; because like fire, it does both give light, and refine, and purifie the Conscience. *Ye are Clean* sayes Christ, but how? *through the word that I have spoken unto you, John* 15. 3. Let the Word of Christ therefore dwell in you richly, 'twill be an Excellent and effectual Antidote against sin and temptation: when your Hearts stand in awe of the Word of God, as *David*'s did, how will it preserve you from defilement!

2. *Affliction is like a Furnace to refine*, That Conscience may be pure, Affliction is to be improved. The Rod of Affliction, though it seem to be dry and withered, yet like *Aaron*'s, 'twill bud and blossom, and bring forth the Fruits of Righteousness, *Heb.* 12. 11. *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the Peaceable Fruits of Righteousness unto them that are Exercised thereby*: And before the Apostle informs us, that 'tis God's design in Afflicting, to refine and purifie, *v.* 9, 10. *We have had Fathers of our Flesh, who Corrected us, and we gave them Reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holiness.* The smart of Affliction does help very much to awaken Conscience, and to discover the evil and danger of sin; and then sin is found to be ten thousand times more bitter when we reflect

reflect upon it, than ever was fansied to be sweet in the time of Temptation. We may indeed with submission pray against Affliction, and intreat that gentler ways may be used to sanctifie us, and we may take the more comfort, and our sincerity will be the more Evident, when milder Methods are effectual. One of our *English* Poets speaks Excellently to this purpose. (*)

Throw away thy Rod,
Throw away thy Wrath.
O my God,
Take the gentle path.

For my hearts desire
Unto thine is bent:
I aspire
To a full consent.

Not a word or look
I affect to own,
But thy Book,
And thy Book alone.

Though I fail, I weep:
Though I halt in pace,
Yet I creep
To the Throne of Grace.

Then let wrath remove,
Love will do the deed;
For with Love
Stony hearts will bleed.

(*) Herbert, *Discipline*, pag. 173, 174.

Love is ſwift of foot;
Love's a Man of War,
And can ſhoot,
And can hit from far.

Who can ſcape his bow?
That which wrought on thee,
Brought thee low,
Needs muſt work on me.

Throw away thy Rod,
Though Man frailties hath,
Thou art God:
Throw away thy Wrath.

But if the Father of Spirits ſees it meet and needful to uſe the Diſcipline of the Rod, it concerns us to hear the Voice of it, and underſtand the meaning: and this it always ſpeaks, and that very plainly, that our Conſciences, and indeed all within us, ſhould be more clean and Holy.

3. *The Blood of Chriſt purges the Conſcience from dead works.* This is the Fountain which in the Gospel is ſet open for Sin, and for Uncleanneſs. 'Tis He *who hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his Blood*, Rev. 1. 5. So, Heb. 9. 14. *How much more ſhall the Blood of Chriſt, who through the Eternal Spirit Offered up himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your Conſciences from dead works to ſerve the Living God.* Though our Lord aimed at our Juſtification, and the Remiſſion of ſin, when he ſhed his Blood, and Sacrificed himſelf for us, yet he had our ſanctification

and cleansing also in his eye. Upon this Account the Apostle *Peter* tells us, *That he bear our sins in his own Body on the Tree; that we being dead unto sins, might live unto Righteousness*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. And we read, *Eph.* 5. 25, 26, 27. that *Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might Sanctifie and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be Holy and without blemish.* Apply this Blood unto your selves, be perswaded that it has a sanctifying vertue; and pray for purity, as that which is a great part of Christ's purchase, as well as your own Perfection.

4. If you would have Conscience pure, *you must not resist, but yield unto the Spirit of Christ.* 'Tis his Work, not onely to shew sin, but to slay it: he convinces of sin, and also Mortifies the deeds of the Body, *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye live after the Flesh, ye shall dye; but if ye through the Spirit do Mortifie the deeds of the Body, ye shall live.* The Power of sin is great, and this Power is strengthned by the Principalities and Powers of Darkness, who do endeavour to keep up sins Dominion: So that if the Spirit of the Lord did not shew the exceeding greatness of his Power, our Hearts and Consciences would still remain defiled; we should never have our Fruit unto Holiness, nor the end everlasting Life. I have done with that sixth particular, *The goodness of Conscience lies in the purity of it.*

7. The goodness of Conscience lies *in the calmness and peace of it.* What the Apostle speaks concerning

the wisdom which is from above, That 'tis first pure, and then peaceable, may be applied unto a good Conscience: first, 'tis pure, then peacable; there may indeed be purity without peace; but there cannot be true peace without purity. There is a false peace which is too commonly found in the ungodly and the Hypocrite; this peace sin does not disturb, but increase: and by this peace the strong man armed does keep possession. But true peace is peculiar unto them that are sanctified; and when once they have attained unto it, they are brought as it were within the Suburbs of Heaven, and see the dawning of that Light which is everlasting. That you may the better discern this true peace of Conscience I shall set it forth in these particulars:

1. True peace of Conscience *is founded upon the Blood of God.* So Christs Blood is called, for as he *was made of the seed of David according to the flesh*, so he is expressly affirmed to be *over all God blessed for ever*, Rom. 9.5. There could be no remission of sin without shedding of blood, and no other blood would serve the turn: the blood of Bulls and goats would not take away sin, Heb. 10. 4. Nay supposing that Mans blood had been shed for us, it would not have been expiatory. *Shall I give my first-born for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my Soul?* Mic. 6. 7. Nothing but what satisfies the justice of God, will satisfie and pacifie the Conscience; and bring it to a well-grounded tranquillity: but 'tis the blood of Christ alone that satisfies divine justice; Conscience therefore can have no true rest till that blood be applied. *Luthers* Conscience could never be quieted with Popish pennance and severities, but when he came to understand that great Article of Christianity,

Faith

Faith in the Blood of Jeſus. (*l*) Oh then the ſtorm was laid; by applying this blood of Chriſt, he was able to joy in God through the Lord Jeſus by whom he had received the atonement. Where the Blood of Chriſt is not known and truſted, there cannot poſſibly be true peace.

2. True peace of Conſcience *ſuppoſes reconciliation with God.* As long as there is no peace above with God, there can be no true peace within. Where this is, the covenant of peace has been taken hold of, and the terms of reconciliation have been ſubmitted to. The Apoſtle tells us that *God is in Chriſt reconcileing the World unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes to them*: Nay, though himſelf be the party injured by ſin, though he be unſought to, though he has no need at all of the ſinner, and be ſo infinitely high above him; yet he ſtoops ſo low *as to beſeech him to be reconciled*, 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. and he does aſſure tranſgreſſors though never ſo great, that if they rely upon Chriſt for pardon, and are broken for ſin, and conſent to turn from all their wicked wayes and thoughts; he will multiply forgiveneſs, and will have mercy upon them. Now when theſe terms are conſented to, and Faith and Repentance are wrought in the heart, God is now no longer a Foe, but a Father. All this is ſuppoſed in peace of Conſcience: 'tis conſequent upon peace with God, and cannot go before it. We muſt *be* the Sons of God, before we can *know we are ſo*, and rejoyce in our Adoption.

(*l*) *In corde meo iſte unus regnat articulus, ſcilicet.* Fides Chriſti, *ex quo, per quem, & in quem omnes meæ diu noctuque fluunt reſumuntque theologicæ cogitationes.* Luther, *in Epiſt. ad Gal. præfat.*

3. True peace of Conscience, *is alwayes joyned with Righteousness:* just as the stars of the same Constellation part not, but rise and set and keep together. The Holy Ghost has joyned Righteousness and Peace: Rom. 14. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Righteousness is put first to shew that all Peace and Joy is false without it. There must be the Righteousness of Christ imputed; and there must be Holiness and Righteousness imparted where true peace is. The fruits of Righteousness are called *peaceable* in Scripture, because *Conscience* is so well satisfied in reflecting upon them. If any known wickedness be practised in the life, or so much as loved and regarded in the heart; as it will be a barr to communion with God, so 'twill be an effectual impediment unto peace of *Conscience.* Isa. 57. 20, 21. *The wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God unto the wicked.*

4. True peace of *Conscience, is not without a Scripture-ground to warrant it.* Upon this account it is called the fruit of the Lips, Isa. 57. 19. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace;* because 'tis built upon that word which the Lord has spoken. The good *Conscience* does argue from Scripture-premises, and drawes both a sweet and a safe conclusion. There are indeed a great many paralogisms or false wayes of arguing; as when we argue our state to be good because Members of the visible Church, and Professors of Religion; because we engage in ordinances and have a name that we live. But a good *Conscience* uses other *Mediums.* It observes what are the Characters of Believers, which are not to be found in any Hypocrite

in

the world; and finding these in the Heart, it does fully conclude a man to be a right Believer. From *surprizing Christ above all*, it argues we have *Faith in him*. From *our loving of God, and desiring after him*, it argues that *we were first loved of him*, 1 Pet. 2. 7. 1 Joh. 4. 19. From *our Repentance and Hatred of sin*, it argues *that Iniquity shall not be our Ruine*. From our *being Spiritually Hungry*, it argues we shall *be filled with good things*. From *our Hearts being in Heaven*, it argues *our Treasure is there*; and that there is a place preparing for us. Such things as these are sound evidences of a good state; and that peace that is thus warranted, is highly Rational: and though the Rain descend, and the Floods come, and the Winds blow, and beat never so vehemently, they will not be able to disturb it.

5. True peace of Conscience is *spoken by the Spirit of God*: therefore it is called the *peace of God*. Phil 4. 7. *The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and mindes through Christ Jesus*. God is said to speak peace to his people, and he does it by his Spirit, Psal. 85. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his People and to his Saints: but let them not turn again to folly*. (*m*) God speaks peace in that he pro-

(m) *Est hæc salutatio*, Gratia & Pax; *&c. nova & inaudita mundo ante prædicationem Evangelii, hæc duo vocabula universum comprehendunt Christianismum; Gratia remittit peccatum, pax tranquillam reddit conscientiam. Duo diaboli nostri qui nos excruciant sunt peccatum & conscientia. Sed hæc duo monstra Christus vicit & conculcavit in hoc sæculo & futuro.* Luther. *in Epist. ad Gal.* c. 1.

miſes good things to his Saints, and in that he aſſures them they are Saints; and that theſe promiſes belong to them. If the Holy Ghoſt did not help the Conſcience, when 'tis looking into us and prying after Grace, and the Evidences of the new Creature; we ſhould never be able to diſcover any thing. Satan and our own hearts together would ſo confound us, that our doubts would be invincible: and we muſt needs be ſtrangers to peace. Saints in Scripture have begged of the Lord to examine and to prove them; and not without reaſon: 'tis from him we have *eye-ſalve to diſcern our condition*, that we may not on the one hand ſay we are rich and increaſed with Goods, when we are Empty and Miſerable: nor on the other hand, ſay we are Empty, when we are partakers of the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt.

6. True peace of Conſcience *is ever accompanied with a Spiritual combat, in which the Spirit does luſt againſt the Fleſh*; to be at peace with the Fleſh and the Luſts of it, is in effect to make a Covenant with death and to be at agreement with Hell. The Apoſtle therefore tells us that in all true Believers, the Fleſh is oppoſed by its contrary the Spirit, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh, and theſe two are contrary the one to the other.* By Spirit here we are to underſtand the ſpiritual and regenerate part in the Saints. *That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.* There is not only a combat between Conſcience and the Fleſh in ſincere Believers; but there is a Combat in their very Hearts and Wills: *Luſting* or Deſiring is an act of the Will; now becauſe 'tis ſaid the Spirit Luſteth againſt the Fleſh, 'tis a ſign the Heart is weary of it. The Will would fain have the Fleſh and the Affections of it crucified. Peace of

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Conscience cannot be where sin is liked and cherished. When Satan does object against a Believer the remainders of corruption; Conscience has this to plead and reply, that these reliques of the old man are a very Body of Death which Believers sigh and groan to be delivered from, Rom. 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*

But here it may be asked, how may this true peace of Conscience be attained? I shall say something at present, though afterward I shall have occasion to speak to this matter.

1. Would you have peace of Conscience; be *humbled more deeply, and grieve more heartily because of sin.* The Apostle does not only say *be afflicted*, but *mourn*, but *weep, let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heavinesse*, Jam. 4. 9. He uses several words importing the same thing, to shew that 'tis not a slight sorrow which sin calls for, nor a little humiliation which will usher in peace. Our Lord calls *the mourners blessed, for they shall be Comforted*: and the Prophet tells us *that the high and lofty one that inhabits Eternity, will dwell with them that are of an humble Spirit*, and to this end, that they may be Comforted; *to revive the Spirit of the humble and to revive the Heart of the Contrite Ones.* Oh reflect upon your selves, call to remembrance how much evil, and how little good has been done by you all your days: those evils which have been done how have they been aggravated; & that good that has been done, how has it been lessened by your manner of doing it! look so long on sin till you find your Hearts break and melt, till you are utterly displeased with your selves. This is the way to have a kind look and a good Word from God. When

Ephraim

Ephraim repented, did smite upon his Thigh, to shew that sin was matter both of his sorrow and indignation, *when he was ashamed and confounded* in himself; What does the the Lord say? *Is Ephraim My dear Son? is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my Bowels are troubled for him and I will surely have Mercy on him saith the Lord, Jer.* 31. 19. 20.

2. If you would have true Peace of Conscience *acquaint your selves better with the Gospel.* The Gospel is called the *Gospel of Peace, the Word of Reconciliation.* Christ is called the *Prince of Peace*, and the Father, *The God of Love and Peace*; and Ministers are stiled the Ambassadors of Peace, that Preach glad tidings of good things. Though upon Mount *Sinai* there be nothing but blackness, and Darkness, and Tempest, though the Law does bind the sinner under the Curse, and cause the Heart to quake and tremble; yet upon Mount *Sion* we may behold *Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and that Blood of sprinking which speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb.* 12. 24. In the Gospel Christ is set forth as a propitiation, and through him God is ready to forgive, and Plenteous in Mercy and Redemption. Here's good news indeed to see all things thus prepared towards an union and agreement; and all that is required of transgressors is, that they should expect peace no other way but by Christ Jesus, and that they should consent to rebell no more. Now when the Conscience observes, that Christ is alone relyed on for reconciliation, and nothing else is trusted in; and that the Heart is grieved at its Rebellions, and now is willing to yield it self to God; Peace hereupon follows.

3. Be not *strangers unto that duty of self-Examination.* The reason why sinners are not troubled is, because they do not know themselves, nor the danger of that Estate in which they are: and the reason why Saints have not Peace, is because they are not so well acquainted with themselves as they should be, they do not so well understand what an happy change the Lord has wrought both relative and real; both in their condition, and in their Heart and Spirits. What delving, and digging, and turning up the bowels of the Earth to find out Silver and Gold! And surely 'tis worth our while to ransack and search our selves throughly, if that we may find what is much more precious then Gold that perishes. The Apostles command is express: *Examine your selves, prove your own selves*, and the end wherefore they were thus to examine and prove, was, that they might know themselves, whether they were in the Faith, whether Christ were in them yea or no, 2 Cor. 13. 5. And while you are thus upon trial of your selves, since a mistake may undo you for ever; cry, that the Lord who knowes you, would teach you to know your selves; and that you may think of your selves as he does.

4. Plead *the Promises of strengthning Grace.* For the more strong you are in Grace the more evident the Truth of it will be. The Lord has promised *you shall grow up as Calves of the stall*, and that you shall thrive *as Willowes by the water-courses.* The *Righteous shall flourish like a Palm-tree, and grow like a Cedar in Lebanon; those that are Planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God*, Psal. 92. 12, 13. and all this to shew *that the Lord is upright, and there is no Unrighteousness in him*, v. 15. So that these

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Promises may with confidence be pleaded, and God will not be backward to fulfil them. The more Grace you have, the more 'twill be exercised, and the more 'tis exercised, the more plainly you will be able to discern it, and consequently have the greater Peace and Comfort in it. Those that have little Grace, and are full of doubts, should strive after so much Grace as to be past doubt.

5. *Love the Commands of God and do them.* If once your Hearts are pleased with the Laws of God, 'tis a sign that you are indeed in Covenant, and *that the Lord has put his Laws in your minds, and writen them in your Hearts, and has been Merciful to your Unrighteousness.* Hearken to the Psalmist, *Great Peace have they that Love thy Law, Psal,* 119. 165. Love of the Law will make us carefull to keep it; and this is the way to have the *Lord manifest himself to us, as he does not manifest himself to the World, Joh* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandements and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that Loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will Love him and will manifest my self to him,* and v. 23. *If a man Love me he will keep my Word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.* The manner of the Father and Sons making their abode in us, we are not so well able to apprehend, but the effects of this in-dwelling are more evident, and Peace is one of those effects. Abound in Obedience and the work of God, for that's the truest Peace where there are most of Fruits of Righteousness, *Isaiah* 48. 18. *Oh that thou hadst harkened to my Commandements! then had thy Peace been as a River and thy Righteousnesse as the Waves of the Sea,*

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6. Be sure that *you connive not at any known sin*. For this will be sure to hinder Peace, I am afraid that in most doubting (I dare not say in all) and complaining Souls, that there are some lusts or other that they deal gently with, and these *Absaloms* do disturb their Peace. They indulge to their passions, inordinate Affections, Pride, Sensuality, Covetousness; and 'tis no marvel that they are strangers to peace. 'Tis not more natural for Water to extinguish Fire, than for allowed sin to hinder peace of Conscience. It exceedingly grieves the Spirit of the Lord, from whom peace flows, and he will suspend his influences, and will neither quicken nor comfort if himself be quenched and grieved. Had *Sampson* peace in the lap of *Delilah*? or *Herod* peace in the embraces of *Herodias*? such things may please the flesh, but they wound the Spirit, and are a trouble to the Conscience. *If you set up idols in your hearts, and the stumbling block of your iniquity before your face, God will answer you accordingly*, and no peace will he speak *till you repent, and turn from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations*, Ezek. 14. 3, 4, 5, 6.

7. Begg earnestly to be *sealed by the spirit unto the day of Redemption*. The Apostle tells the *Ephesians*, that *after they Believed, they were sealed with the holy spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our Inheritance*, Chap. 1. 13, 14. This sealing of the Spirit as it does imply Sanctification, and setting us apart for God from profane uses, so also an intimation that we are Sanctified, in Order to our being fitted for an incorruptible and undefiled Inheritance. As 'tis the Spirit which does convince the World of sin, so 'tis he who does convince the Saints that they have Grace and Righteousness. O therefore pray, that this Comfor-

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ter *may come and abide in you for ever*; for though you have the *Privy Seal* really upon you *of Gods fore-knowledge and Election*; though you have the *Seals of the Covenant* administred; nay, though you are *Sealed with the Image of God* in effectual Calling and Regeneration; yet till this Sealing Spirit does make it Evident, you will not have Peace. Thus of that seventh Particular, The goodness of Conscience *lies in the Calmness and Peace of it.*

8. The goodness of Conscience lies in this, *That 'tis void of Offence.* The Apostle does profess, that herein he did *Exercise himself, to have a Conscience void of Offence, both towards God, and also towards Man,* Acts 24. 16. A good Conscience has Respect unto both Tables of the Law: Godliness and Honesty are both Commanded; that is, a regard to God, and to our Neighbour. (*n*) A good Conscience takes Notice what the Lord chiefly calls for, namely, our Reverence, our Faith, our Love, our Delight; and is not satisfied with any External Acts of Worship, unless these Internal and more acceptable pieces of Service are given to him. 'Tis careful also that our Duty towards Man be performed, because the Commands which enjoyn this have the stamp of Gods Authority upon them; and we cannot sin against our Brother, but we sin against the Lord, in whose Image Man is made, and who has Commanded us to Love our Neighbour

(n) —— *Pblieg asque miserrimus omnes*
Admonet, & magnâ testatur voce per umbras,
Discite justitiam moniti & non temnere Divos.
Virgil. *Æneid.* 6.

as our selves. A good Conscience will not suffer any to be careless of those Duties of Mercy and Righteousness towards Men; because God is so strict, as to those, that he will permit the external Acts of his own Service to be omitted, rather than Mercy should not be shewn. *Go ye and learn that*, says Christ, *I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*: That is, *Mercy* rather than *Sacrifice*. *q. d.* If Sacrifice cannot be Offered, but Mercy must be Neglected, let me be without Sacrifice, rather than thy Brother that needs it, be without Mercy.

Two things are here to be Observed: A good Conscience is void of Offence, in that it will neither *give* Offence, nor *take* it.

1. A good Conscience *is afraid of giving Offence*. What is the Work of Satan? 'Tis to Offend God as much as he is able, and to be putting stumbling-blocks before Men, that hereby they may fall into sin. Now, surely Satan is in no wise to be imitated. A scandalous Life, and a good Conscience cannot stand together. How expres and full is that Command, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32? *Give no Offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.* Those that are within, are not to be Offended, lest they be grieved and discouraged: Those that are without, are not to be offended, lest they be confirmed in their prejudices against Religion, and hardned in their wickedness: Therefore we are to walk circumspectly, to Act as upon a Theatre, where many Eyes behold us, and all to this end, *That we may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without Rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, among whom we are to shine as Lights in the World*, Psal. 2. 15.

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2. A good Conscience *will take no Offence*; that is, not at God, not at Christ, not at Religion; whatever it sees done by Men, or whatever it beholds come to pass by the Providence of the Lord. A good Conscience likes not Religion the worse, though there be never so many Hypocrites; for all the Men in the World cannot so much inveigh against Hypocrites, as Christ does speak against and threaten them. It likes not Truth the worse, though never so many are led away with the Error of the wicked; though so many were turned *Arrians*, yet *Athanasius* stood up for the God-head of our Lord Jesus. A good Conscience likes not Christ the worse, though never so many Apostatize; nor Holiness the worse, though every where spoken against; nor Christianity the worse, because of the Cross and Persecution.

But here two Questions are to be resolved, how to take, and how giving offence may be prevented?

Would you take no Offence?

1. *Labour after a greater measure of Understanding*; those that are in the dark, or whose Eyes are dim, are more apt to stumble. A clearly enlightned Conscience will weigh things well, and will easily perceive how unreasonable 'tis to take offence at Religion for the miscarriages of Professors, which Religion does so much condemn, and not in the least encourage or allow of: How unreasonable 'tis to take offence at the Gospel of Christ, because of the Crosse, since the Crosse is so needful, is so much sweetned? and the *sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with that glory that is to be revealed*, Rom. 8. 18.

2. *Let your Love be stronger and stronger*; this will lift you up above, and carry you over all difficulties, and stumbling blocks. They that Love the Law of the Lord, the *Psalmist* tells us, *that nothing shall Offend them*, Psal. 119. 165. *Jacob*'s Love towards *Rachel* hindred him from taking offence at any thing; his Wages are changed, he must serve fourteen years; yet Love made all to be swallowed. Love to God and to his Word, will make you content with any thing; you will know how to want, and how to abound; how to go through Honour and Dishonour, good Report, and evil Report: Love will break through all difficulties, and make you follow hard after God.

3. Consider the *Happiness of those that are not Offended*, Mat. 11. 6. *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be Offended in me.* When Discouragements are mighty, and Temptations are strong to make us forsake our Lord, and yet we cleave to him, he takes it the more kindly, and we shall in no wise be losers.

But, Secondly, *Would you give no Offence?* Then,

1. Seriously think of *the danger of scandal*: thou that dost harden a sinner, or grieve a Saint, *'twere better a Millstone were hanged about thy Neck, and thou cast into the depth of the Sea*, Mat. 18. 6. Scandal does mightily Heighten Transgression, and the punishment hereafter will be proportionable.

2. Be encouraged with this, *That scandal is possible to be avoided.* You may Live so, as to be Blessings in the places where you Live, and justly an Offence to none. I do not say, you may Live wholly free from sin, but you may be kept from grosse and

scandalous sins altogether. (o) *Samuel* had carried himself so, that the *Israelites* could not charge him with any miscarriage. *I have walked before you from my Child-hood unto this day; behold, here I am, bear witness against me before the Lord, and before his Anointed, Whose Ox have I taken? Whose Asse have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I Oppressed? Or of whose hand have I received any Bribe to blind mine Eyes therewith?* 1 Sam. 12. 2, 3. So the Apostle 1 *Thes.* 2. 10. *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how Holily and Justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that Believe:* that is, You that were most Acquainted with us, and did most Observe us, could spye nothing scandalous or blame-worthy in us. He that writes the Life of Mr. *Robert Bolton*, tells us, that he walked so with God, that he could not be taxed with any grosse or scandalous sin from his Conversion to his Dissolution, which was about three Years. Be encouraged by such Examples, and by the same Grace which wrought such effects in them, endeavour the same in thee.

3 Plead the *Honour of Religion, and God's Name* as an Argument to prevail with him to preserve you from scandalous Iniquities. Tell him you desire to be kept without Rebuke, that his Name may be Secured from Blasphemy, and that his Doctrine may in all things be Adorned.

Thus have I at large Discoursed concerning the first thing which I proposed. I have told you wherein a

(o) *Sanctorum vitam inveniri posse dicimus sine crimine; peccato autem qui se vivere existimat, non id agit ut peccatum habeat, sed ut veniam non accipiat. Augustin.*

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goodness of Conscience lies, and how it may be attained.

In the second place I am to tell you wherein the Acts of a good Conscience, and the Acts of the good Spirit of God are to be distinguished the one from the other: and before I shew the difference between them, I shall lay down these ensuing Propositions.

1. *All that good, whether Light or Grace, or Peace that is in the Conscience, is wrought by the Spirit of God:* as Gifts are from the Spirit, so is Grace most certainly from the same Spirit, and all that comfort which has any Reason or Foundation proceeds from this Comforter. Whatever means have been effectual to the softening of the Heart and Conscience, 'tis from the Spirit they have had their Efficacy. Whatever then we discern in our selves that is truly good, we must eye the Spirit as the Efficient of it, and without his working it would never have been in us at all, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. *But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing unto every Man severally as he will.*

2. *Whenever Conscience does its Duty, and Acts as it ought, 'tis certainly Acted by the Spirit.* As the Spirit does infuse the Habits of Grace, so 'tis he that does produce them into Act and Exercise; as he does cast the Seed of God into the Heart, so he makes that Seed to grow, and to bring forth Fruit. *I Laboured,* says the Apostle, *yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me,* 1 Cor. 15. 10. If in a Natural sence we are said to Live in God, and move in him also. Surely the Spirit of God is the Author of all spiritual Life, and of all spiritual and Holy Motions.

3. *Conscience though never so good must arrogate nothing to it self, but all praise is due unto the Lord.* For it is he that makes the difference between the best and the worst Conscience, and the best would be the worst if he did not make a difference. A good Conscience is said *to bear witness in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. 9. And as it bears witness in the Holy Ghost, so it moves to Duty, checks from Sin, encourages upon Well-doing; and all this it does in the Holy Ghost, by his illumination and assistance.

4. 'Tis true that *the Spirit of God does make use of Conscience very much in his dealing with us.* He deals with us as those which have such a power as Conscience, and that are in a capacity of reviewing our selves; and applying what is spoken either by way of Terrour or by way of Consolation; and if the Spirit aid us, we shall review and apply to some purpose.

Having laid down these things, I distinguish between the Acts of the Spirit, and the Acts of a good Conscience, thus.

1. The Spirit of God is the *Principal Agent*; the good Conscience *Acts under him.* As in the work of Conversion the Act of the Minister, and the Act of the Spirit are vastly different. The Minister is a worker together with God, that is, he is honoured so far, as to be employed as an instrument to good; but what's his Words or Arguments to raise the dead in trespasses and sins? 'tis the Spirit that causes Life to enter into the dead dry bones. He that plants is nothing, and he that waters is nothing; so truly unless the Spirit did second Conscience, its acts would be insignificant, it would be little or

all heeded; nay, it ſelf would become dull and heedleſs.

2. The Spirits *motions do differ from the impulſes of Conſcience.* Where the Spirit of the Lord does move more immediately, his motions are with greater power and with greater Liberty. The ungodly themſelves are not altogether ſtrangers unto the Power of the Spirit. How doth it check them, and reſtrain them; and dam up the ſtream of Corruption for a ſeaſon, as long as 'tis put forth! but chiefly this power is apparent in them that are effectually called. The Spirit impelling them to come to God, does bring them quite home; his impulſe ſhall fetch them out of the fartheſt Country, and bring them to their Fathers houſe. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is power; and where the *Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*, 2 Cor. 3. 17. The Spirit not only moves us to obey, but alſo enlarges our hearts that we may run the way of the Lords commandments.

3. The Spirits *Convictions differ from the Accuſations of Conſcience*, as the Cauſe and Effect, as the Antecedent and the Conſequent. The Spirit firſt ſets ſin in order before our eyes, and then *Conſcience* does accuſe and reproach us becauſe of it. And where the Spirit does by a more immediate operation, give a ſight of ſin, and bring it to remembrance; Oh how is the heart affected! What ſelf-abhorrency and abaſement! what Sorrow and Shame! what Knocking of the Breaſt, and Smiting upon the Thigh is there! *Surely* (ſayes Ephraim) *after I was turned I repented, and after I was inſtructed I ſmote upon my Thigh; I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my Youth*, Jer. 31. 19. Now 'twas the

Spirit that did thus instruct and turn him. Thus Ezek. 36. 27. I will put *my Spirit within you.* And it follows, ver. 31. *Then shall ye remember your evil ways and your doings that were not good; and shall loath your selves in your own sight, for your iniquities and for your abominations.*

4. The Spirits *witness concerning our adoption differs from the witness of our own Spirits,* from the testimony of our own Consciences. The Apostle speaks very plainly of a twofold witness, that of Our Spirits and that of Gods Spirit, Rom. 8. 16. *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirits, that we are the children of God.* This witness of the Spirit does not lye onely in his declaring in the Scriptures what kind of Persons are the children of God; but he also helps Believers to see that they are such kind of persons; and then enables them to draw the conclusion that they are Children, and Heirs; Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ unto the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance. Now the difference between the witness of the Spirit, and that of Conscience touching our adoption, is in these particulars,

1. The Spirits witness is *more clear,* Conscience *more conjectural.* As we see things ten thousand times more plainly by the Light of the Sun, than by a dim Lamp that burns by us; and yet by that Lamp we may see something.

2. The Spirits witness causes *greater Boldness and Confidence than that of Conscience.* When the Spirit of Adoption is sent into the heart, it makes Believers come with Boldness to the Throne of Grace; and to cry *Abba Father,* that is, *Father Father*; the word

doubled to ſhew with what confidence the Spirit makes it to be ſpoken, *Gal.* 4. 6. Then they draw nigh with high Hopes, and raiſed Expectations, that their Father will deal bountifully, give liberally, and though they open their mouths never ſo wide, that yet they ſhall be filled with his fulneſs.

3. The Spirits teſtimony *is more firm, and not ſo eaſily queſtioned*; that of Conſcience *is more apt to be cavil'd at by Satan.* If I ſee a thing plainly in the day time, I know I ſee it; and though many ſhould queſtion whether I ſaw or no, yet I make no queſtion: nay though ſome diſtracted perſons that are kept in darkneſs and chains, ſhould ſay they ſee when they don't, yet I know I ſee when I do. The Spirits teſtimony does make things thus clear; And the objections of the Accuſer of the Brethren, 'tis evident they are but cavils. Thus ſays the Apoſtle *We have known and believed the love that God hath to us*, 1 Joh. 4. 16. But the teſtimony of Conſcience Satan will be more bold to queſtion, and will ſtart an hundred things whereby a weaker Faith may be puzled, and the heart ſtill kept under doubts and fears.

4. The Spirits teſtimony *produces joy*, that of Conſcience at beſt *onely a calmneſs and tranquillity.* I confeſs the Apoſtle ſayes the *teſtimony of Conſcience was his rejoycing*, but you muſt know, that he had alſo received the witneſs and earneſt of the Spirit; ſo that he had more than Conſciences bare teſtimony. The joy that the Spirit creates by his aſſuring Believers of their adoption, is unſpeakable and full of glory. 'Tis ſuch as no Tongue can utter, and no Heart can conceive of but ſuch as have had a taſte and experience of it. 'Tis not meerly a negative thing, or freedom from trouble,

but positive and carries with it such a delight as is not to be found in the highest sensuality. The Malefactor is at peace when he receives a pardon; but if he be not only pardoned but Preferred, this causes joy. The Spirit lets the Soul see 'tis pardoned, and preferr'd to be a Child of God, an Heir of Glory, and gives a taste how Gracious the Lord is, this causes not only peace but joy and triumph of Spirit in the God of Salvation.

I come now to the third thing I proposed, to give you the reasons why it should be every one's great care to have good Conscience.

1. *We can have no Communion with God without a good Conscience.* unless our *Hearts are sprinkled from an evil Conscience* we cannot draw nigh to him, nether will he draw nigh to us: Though we say with never so great confidence that *we have Fellowship with God*, if Conscience knows *that we walk in darkness* and we allow our selves in the works of darkness; the Holy Ghost gives us the lye to our face, *and we do not the Truth*, 1 John 1. 6. There cannot be a question asked of greater importance than this, wherein does mans happiness lye? and the truest answer unto this question is, Mans felicity does lye in Fellowship with God. Therefore the happiness of the triumphant Saints is so full because they are admitted unto so near Communion with God. Therefore the Misery of the damned is so great, because they are banished from the Lords presence, and despair of ever coming neer to him, or enjoying of him. And therefore the happiness of militant Saints is imperfect, because the remainders of sin in them do hinder them from enjoying so much of God as otherwise they might enjoy. But where Conscience is evil there is no enjoying of God

at all: Where there is no true Holiness, sinners are without God in the World, *they spend their Mony for that which is not Bread, and their labour for that which satisfies not*, Isa. 55. 2. They only have recourse to broken Cisterns that can hold no water; but they neglect, and by their iniquities are kept at a distance from the Fountain of living Waters. Thus that which is the Hell of Hell they undergo on Earth, and yet such is their stupidness, they are little, if at all concerned.

2. Without a good Conscience *no service that we perform can be acceptable.* A bad Conscience is like the dead Flie in the Apothecaries Oyntment, that spoils the whole. This was it that made the Lord to speak thus to *Israel* of old, Isa. 1. 11, 12, 13. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of Burnt-Offerings, and the fat of fed Beasts, and I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks or of Lambs, or of He-Goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required at your hands, to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations, incense is an Abomination to me: the Sabbaths and calling of Assemblies I cannot away with: it is Iniquity even the solemn meeting. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine Eyes from you: yea, when you make many Prayers I will not Hear.* And the reason of all this was, because their Consciences were defiled with Blood, with injustice, with unmercifulness, with oppression. Thus also *Isa.* 66. 3. because their Consciences were defiled *by chusing their own way and their souls delighted in their abominations*, the Lord says, *He that kills an Oxe, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrifices a Lamb, is as if he cut off a Dogs neck; he that offers an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood; he*

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that burneth Incense as if he blessed an Idol. Two things are absolutely necessary unto the acceptation of our services, one is the *Mediation of our Lord Jesus*, and therefore our sacrifices, though never so spiritual, are said to be *acceptable through Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 2. 5. and the other, the *cleansing of Conscience from all known and allowed sin*, for iniquity *will separate between us and our God, and make him hide his face from us.*

3. Without a good Conscience there can be *no quiet or Peace but will prove exceedingly to our prejudice.* (p) The mirth of distracted and phrantick persons makes us ready to weep, because we know how little reason there is for it; and thus unreasonable is security and peace, where there is an evil Conscience. Sin is such a Master, as none of its Servants have cause to be very jocund. When Death and Hell, (which is the wages of sin) is paid, then I am sure 'twill be sad day with sinners, and all their jollity will be turned into the height of anguish and tribulation. Art thou without a good Conscience, and yet art quiet? thy quietness is thy Disease. As there is a Natural Lethargy whereby Bodies sleep unto natural Death, so there is a Spiritual Lethargy whereby Souls sleep unto Eternal Death: and they wake not till the sight of an angry God upon the Judgment-seat, and the feeling of the unquenchable flames of Hell awake them. He had a bad Conscience that said *Soul take thine ease*; and so had he, that *fared sumptuously every day*, but their ease did them harm, and was a means to bring

(p) *Malâ & tranquillâ conscientiâ sicut nihil pejus ita nihil infelicius, hæc est illa quæ nec Deum timet nec hominem reverentur.* Bern. *De Conscien.* cap. 3. pag. 1109.

them

them unto these torments where no ease is to be looked for: Ah woe unto sinners that are at ease! *the ease of the simple does slay them, and the prosperity of Fools destroyes them,* Prov. 1. 32.

4. Without a good Conscience *'tis impossible that we should be truly good our selves,* If Conscience be bad, all things else within us are likely to be a great deal worse. If this which should restrain from sin connive at sin, how will iniquity abound! if this which should be urging unto duty does not it self do its Duty, how will duty be cast off! there will quickly be a saying unto God *depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes; what is the Almighty that we should serve him?* Job 21. 14, 15. To say that a man has no Conscience, is as much as to say that a man has no goodness. When a sinner is indeed turned unto God, one of the first things that is wrought upon in him is his Conscience; and the more Holy he is, still his Conscience does become more Pure, and wakeful, and tender. When a sinner that is almost perswaded to be a Christian, falls back again, and becomes as vile, nay, viler than ever; his Conscience rings him many a sad peal to prevent his relapse, and 'tis sometimes a great while before his Conscience can be charmed. But if once this is laid into a Dead sleep, the lusts of the Heart will grow impetuous and strong; the affections will be vile, and at length there may be a running out to all excesse of Riot in the Conversation. Certainly if Conscience be bad the whole man is defiled; if Conscience does exercise no Authority for God, sinners will fulfill the desires of the Flesh and of the Mind, and will walk according to the course of this World, *according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit which worketh in the Children of Disobedience.*

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5. Without a good Conscience, as nothing *is good to us*, so nothing *is good or pure to us*. The Apostlet ells us *that unto the pure all things are pure, but to them whose Minds & Consciences are defiled there is nothing pure*, *Tit.* 1. 15. A bad Conscience defiles every thing. A man that is Conscious to himself of loved and reigning sin, whatever Creatures he uses, he abuses; his Food, his Estate, his Health, his Strength are all impure to him, because his Corruptions are served with all these, his blessings are turned into Curses because he makes a sinful and Cursed use of them. Nay not only things secular, but also things sacred, even the Ordinances of God, are prophaned and polluted by an evil Conscience, Prayer is turned into an Abomination, and the Lord calls it *Howling*, *Hos.* 7. 14. *They have not cryed unto me with their Hearts when they howled upon their beds.* The word becomes a savour of Death unto Death, the Eyes being shut, and the Ears closed, and the Heart being more hardened under it. Receiving the Lords Supper is turned into a *being guilty of the Body & blood of the Lord and Eating and Drinking Damnation to our selves*, 1 Cor. 11. Thus a bad Conscience which suffers sin to rule without any considerable disturbance, spoyls all we do, turns good into Evil; and the better things are in themselves makes them so much the worse to us. (q)

(q) *As dirty hands foul all they touch,*
And those things most, which are most pure and fine:
So our clay-hearts, ev'n when we crouch
To sing thy praises, make them less divine.
Yet either this,
Or none thy portion is.
Herb. *Misery*, p. 93.

6. Till

6. Till Conscience be good *how extreamly dangerous your Estate?* We are the Children of Wrath, the Sons of Death, Condemned already, not sure to be a day or hour out of that place of Torment, where the Worm does not dye, and the Fire none can quench. When the Lord speaks to the Ungodly, his mouth is full of threatnings, his words are woes and curses, and not one syllable of Encouragement or hope does he give them as long as they are resolved to continue in their wickedness. Indeed, if they are willing to have their Consciences and Conversations cleansed, then he declares himself inclined to Mercy, and to make them white as Wool or Snow, though before red like Scarlet, or like Crimson, *Isa.* 1. 16. 18. But as long as Conscience is secure, and the sinner is resolved and obstinate, alas! God is angry with him every day, the Vial is continually filling fuller, and more wrath is treasured up against the day of wrath. If the sinner turn not, the Lord hath whet his Sword, he hath bent his Bow, and made it ready; and who knows how soon the Arrow may be shot, that may dispatch the sinner in the twinkling of an Eye, and both kill and damn together.

7. If Conscience be not good, *how great and intolerable may be the torture of it when it is awakened!* *Solomon* tells us, That *the Spirit of a Man may sustain his Infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* These wounds are made by sin, as the Meritorious cause, and by the hand of God himself, as an Holy, Righteous, Dreadful, Sin-revenging Majesty. The buffetings of Satan indeed are sometimes very troublesome and terrible; but what are the buffetings of a Creature, if compared with the blows and wounds of Him that is Almighty. When God shall say to a sinful soul, *Behold,*

I am against thee, Ezek. 5. 8. When God shall run upon a Transgressor as a Giant, and break him with breach upon breach, surely his hands will not be strong, his heart will not be able to endure. 'Twas a saying of *Luther*, (q) That an evil Conscience being indeed wounded, had rather be turned into a thousand forms, had rather venture upon Rocks, and Flames, & Mountains of brass, nay, upon the Devil himself, than have to do with God. The Design of which passage is, to shew how terrible the Lord is unto a guilty and enraged Conscience. Saints are said *to be Drunken, but not with Wine*, unless it be the Wine of Astonishment: and they are compared to *a wild Bull in a Net, being full of the Fury of the Lord, and the Rebuke of God*, Isa. 50. 20, 21.

If you look into Scripture, you may find the Saints themselves complaining of these wounds in their Consciences. Listen to *Job*, Chap. 6, 2, 3, 4. *O that my grief were throughly weighed, and my Calamity laid in the Balances together: For now it would be heavier than the sand of the Sea; therefore my words are swallowed up, for the Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poyson whereof drinketh up my spirit, the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* The Psalmist speaks to the same purpose, *Psal.* 88. 14, 15, 16. *Lord, why castest thou off my soul, why hidest thou thy Face from me? I am Afflicted and ready to die from my youth up, while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted, thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off.* And if Saints have drank so deep of this Cup of Trembling,

(q) *Animus malè sibi conscius potius in mille rerum formas verteretur, ac citius per saxa, per ignes, per æneos montes, denique ad Diabolum ipsum ferretur; quam ad Deum accederet.* Luther. Tom. 1. *In Genes.* c. 43.

oh how bitter may it be to ſinners! (r) As therefore you would avoid the Lords contending with you, which will make your ſpirits fail before him, it ſhould be your care to have a good Conſcience.

8. A good Conſcience, as it will make thoſe that have it to *be better and better themſelves*, ſo it will render them *exceedingly beneficial, and make them bleſſings unto others.* A good Conſcience, like *Rebecca* of old, is weary of the Daughters of *Heth*, and is not ſatisfied unleſs the Fleſh be (like the houſe of *Saul*) growing weaker and weaker, and the Spirit be (like the houſe of *David*) growing ſtronger and ſtronger. Conſcience puts the Saints upon following on to know the Lord, and following harder after him; and though the leaſt Grace deſerve Infinite and Eternal thanks, and Conſcience urges unto praiſe, yet withall it adds, that the higheſt meaſures of Holineſs are not to be reſted in, but ſtill there muſt be a growing up into Chriſt in all things, untill we arrive unto a perfect ſtature in his Kingdom.

A good Conſcience will alſo make us publick bleſſings unto others. (s) It conſiders we are not

(r) *Eſt intus animi vigor,*
Arce conditus abditâ.
Hæc venena potentius
Detrahunt hominem ſibi.
Dira, quæ penitus meant,
Nec nocentia corpori
Mentis vulnere ſæviunt.
Boetius. l. 4. Met. 3. pag. *mihi*. 122.

(s) *Vir bonus eſt commune bonum.*

Born,

Born, or New-born onely for our selves. It will make us beneficial to the Church, and to the World.

1. *To the Church.* If there were more of Conscience it would hinder Animosities, Contentions, Divisions, Declinings, the decay of Love, and of the Power of Godliness. Conscience is for Peace and Unity, and for walking as Saints and Brethren. Mens Passions and Interests put them upon those courses that tend to Dividing and Destroying the Church of Christ.

2. *To the World.* A good Conscience will make us to put on Bowels, and to compassionate Mankind; 'twill hinder us from Offending them, and hardening them against Religion; 'twill make us pray for, and endeavour the gaining and saving of them. It will *cause our Light so to shine before Men, that they seeing our good Works, may Glorifie our Father which is in Heaven*, and at length they may be brought to desire to become themselves of the Number of his Children. I have done with the Reasons of the Doctrine. I come *now to the Application.*

USE 1. Shall be of *Reproof.* If it should be the care of all to have a good Conscience, alas, whose heart may not smite him? who has not Reason to acknowledge that a sharp Reproof is but justly due? Conscience in these last and worst days seems to have left the Earth; and truly, till there are better Consciences, there may not be better days; or if there should be better times, they would but prove a Judgment; For if Mens Hearts are stupid under Adversity, Prosperity is not likely to awaken them. *The Lord looks down from Heaven upon the Children of*

Men,

Men, to ſee if there be any that do underſtand and ſeek him, Pſal. 14. 2. But what kind of Hearts and Conſciences have the moſt of Men! God is ſurely Angry, and his Meſſengers are to be Reprovers, and they muſt Reprove ſharply, that they may touch the Conſcience to the quick. And who knows but that the word in their mouths may be *quick and powerful, ſharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing, even to dividing aſunder of the Soul and Spirit, of the Joynts and Marrow, and may be a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. 4. 12.

My Reproof I ſhall Direct unto ſeveral ſorts of Perſons.

1. They are to be Reproved, *whoſe Conſciences are Ignorant*. They are Ignorant of God, and Ignorant of themſelves, and which is worſe, they care to know neither. Though God be the moſt Excellent Object that can be known, though without Knowing him there can be no enjoying him, though the knowledge of God be Transforming, and change us into his Image and Likeneſs; yet how many are willingly Ignorant! they care not to know him, nor his will, nor what he is able to do, either for them or againſt them. There is a black veil upon their hearts, ſo that they ſee not their Happineſs, nor their Miſery. This makes them unconcernedly, and without fear to turn their backs upon Chriſt and Heaven, and to make great ſpeed after Satan in thoſe ways that lead unto utter perdition.

They are miſerably unacquainted with themſelves, they ſee not in what ſtate they are, they know not whither they are going. *They deſpiſe their own ways*, that is, they take no more Notice of their own doings, than we do of thoſe whom we moſt of all contemn;

And as for their hearts they are *Terra incognita*, Land never yet Discovered. They may truly that their Hearts were born with them, that Hearts have been bred up with them, and that have carried their Hearts up and down with them their days, and yet they and their Hearts are unacquainted. Oh that these dark Consciences would but consider these three things.

1. *How much evil there is in Ignorance.* Let Papists say, That 'tis the Mother of Devotion, the Scripture speaks otherwise, That 'tis the Parent of Wickedness. The Prophet having said, there was *no knowledge of God in the Land*, presently adds, *by swearing, lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and Blood toucheth Blood*, Hos. 4. 1,2. intimating, that Ignorance of God was the cause of all the other abominations. So *Jer.* 9. 2, 3. *They be all Adulterers, an Assembly of Treacherous Men; they bend their Tongue like their Bow for lies, but they are not valiant for the Truth, and they proceed from evil to evil.* Now, from whence is all this? *They know not me, saith the Lord.* Certainly the Souls of Men are alienated from the Life of God, and encouraged in wickedness through the Ignorance that is in them. When Conscience is Blind, what is there to lay restraint upon Corrupted Nature? And if there be no restraint, the desperate Corruption of it will quickly appear, and wickedness will be done with greediness, *Eph.* 4. 18, 19.

2. *How inexcusable is this Ignorance, considering the Light that shines, and the means of Knowledge.* The Advantage of the Jews was great in that *the Oracles of God were committed to them*, Rom. 3. 1, 2. here-

thes

were priviledged above the other Nations, that Lord had given his VVord unto them. But we an Advantage above the Jews, because the Re-lation of the Lords VVill, and of his Glory is much clearer under the New Testament than it was under the Old. How fully hath God spoken to us in these last days by his Son! Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, Death and Destruction are dis-covered. Christ Crucified is Preached, who is the Lord of Life and Glory, and a Saviour from Destruc-tion. Oh, how are they without Apology, who shut their Eyes against so glorious a Light, and will not know those things which are of so high concernment to themselves! Oh, you dark and heedless Souls, you may be wept over, as Christ did over *Jerusalem*, be-cause you *will not know, in this your day, the things that belong to your Peace*, though quickly, in a way of Judgment, *they may be hid from your eyes*, Luke 19. 41, 42.

3. *This Ignorance, as light as you make of it, is de-structive.* None ever did hit upon the way to Life be-fore they were aware: The blind will never enter in at the straight Gate, but must needs go on in that broad Road that leads to Death and Hell. *Solomon* speaks expressly, *Prov.* 29. 18. *Where there is no Vision the People perish.* You read also, *Hos.* 4. 6. *My People are destroyed for lack of Knowledge.* VVhen the Lord does save any, he gives them an Heart to know himself and his Son Christ Jesus; *but if the Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost*, 2 Cor. 4. 3.

I know many Ignorant sinners look upon their Igno-rance as their excuse for their wickedness; but how can Ignorance excuse them, since they are glad of their Ig-norance, are not desirous to know; nay, hate the

Light, which might diſcover their evil deeds? V
are told, that *this is* the *Condemnation*, that is,
cauſe of ſore Condemnation, *that Light is come i*
the World, and Men love Darkneſs rather than Li
becauſe their Deeds are evil, John 3. 19. 'Tis a co
mon thing for Ignorant ones to have a Blind and
ſumptuous truſt and confidence in God, and nothi
more uſual in their mouths than this: *He that*
us, will ſave us. But let ſuch hearken to the Prophe
tremble, *Iſa.* 27. 11. *It is a People of no underſta*
ing, therefore he that made them will not have M
on them, and he that formed them will ſhew the
Favour.

2. They are to be Reproved, whoſe Conſcien
are large, and can ſwallow almoſt any thing. Suc
ſuck in with greedineſs the looſeſt Principles; and
are they pleaſed with an Argument craftily mana
by a Profane Wit, againſt that preciſeneſs which
Goſpel does require! How do they grudge their
and pains to God, and to their Souls! But to
World, and to their Luſts they are exceeding Libe
Theſe large Conſciences do ſtretch Chriſtian Li
even to a moſt ſinful Licentiouſneſs. *Quod libet i*
cet. They will plead for any thing to be Lawful, w
they like, though never ſo much to be condem
Some will plead for ſports upon the Lords day, o
for vain and fooliſh talking and jeſting, others fo
ficious lying, others for perjury to ſave a man
from damage. This largeneſs of Conſcience,
largely has it ſpread it ſelf! But the larger Conſci
is, the narrower will be our Obedience; the leſs
be done for God, and more againſt him; the leſs
be done in Order to Salvation, and more towards
etc

ternal destruction. I would here propose these three things unto them whose Consciences are of so great a latitude.

1. This largeness of Conscience argues great *contempt of God and of his Will*; there is not a standing in awe of him and of his word. His word is very strict, his commands holy, and requires that we should walk *circumspectly exactly and circumspectly*, this is to be wise; to do otherwise is to discover the most dangerous folly. Eph. 5. 15. *What manner of persons*, sayes the Apostle, *ought ye to be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness!* 2 Pet. 3. 11. But notwithstanding all this, large consciences live at random, as if preciseness were more ado than needs; and as if the Lord did but jest in his Holy Precepts, and those terrible threats which back them; but they to their cost shall find and feel he is in good earnest.

2. This largeness of Conscience is a shrewd sign *that sinners are in the broad way*. They that can swallow camels, 'tis easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for them to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The Scribes and Pharisees of old, *did omit the weightier matters of the Law, Judgement, Mercy and Faith*; But Christ does denounce *a wo unto them*, Mat. 23. 23. Largeness of Conscience discovers a great carelessness of the soul, and too great an indifferency what becomes of it for ever: And what souls are likely to miscarry if such be not? We must work out our Salvation with fear and trembling if we will be saved.

3. The larger Conſcience is, and the more is ſu
lowed at preſent; *the greater hereafter will the a
count be.* We are all Stewards, which muſt ſhor
give an account of our ſtewardſhip: and though
preſent ſome, like the ſteward in the Goſpel, many
their Bills, and write Fourſcore, or Fifty for an
dred; Yet our Lord who will call us to an Acco
will be exact in reckoning, and cannot be deceived
us. *His judgement is according to Truth*, Rom.
And oh how many things will he condemn at the
day, which ſinners defend at preſent! 'Twill be
deed a day of Light and Manifeſtation, both of th
and perſons. Many perſons that went for Saints, w
then be unmasked and found Hypocrites, and
their ſad portion with the Hypocrites; And many th
that where counted no ſins, will be found great ſins,
the lighter they were made of, the more heavy
damnable they will prove unto the ſinner. A lar
Conſcience therefore take heed of. Attend unto the La
and to the Teſtimony, which does diſcover evil;
be afraid of every evil way.

3. They are to be reproved *whoſe Conſciences are a
peace, but that peace has no ſolid and good foundati*
The moſt of ſinners in the world, have this falſe pea
in their own Spirits; ſometimes they are a little aw
kened, but are quickly huſhed aſleep again, by that e
One who does deſtroy ſouls by thouſands, and by mil
ons, by carnal ſecurity. Tranſgreſſors when firſt the
venture upon ſin, their Conſciences recoyl upon them
but by degrees they grow ſenſeleſſe; Cuſtom in ſi
and

and Quiet in ſin, do go commonly together. (t) One of the Fathers does excellently deſcribe, how the ungodly arrive unto this falſe peace. At firſt, ſayes he, ſin does ſeem intolerable, afterwards, onely heavy, after that being frequently given way to, and Conſcience ſtunned by many wounds; makes no great matter of them: in proceſs of time, ſin is not burthenſome at all but pleaſant; at laſt 'tis turned into a ſecond nature; and the ſinner can no more be drawn from it, than the *Ethiopian* can change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots, *Jer.* 13. 23. *Can the* Ethiopian *change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo do good that are accuſtomed to do evil.*

A great many not onely Profane, but Profeſſors, are concerned in this reproof; and have no better than a falſe peace of Conſcience. Here therefore I am to ſhew what that peace of Conſcience is, which is falſe; and alſo how unreaſonable it is, to give entertainment to it. A falſe peace of Conſcience I ſhall deſcribe to you in theſe particulars:

1. That peace of Conſcience is falſe *where Sin and Miſery were never ſeen.* They who never perceived any harm in ſin, and wonder why the Lord in his word does ſpeak ſo much againſt it, and why his Miniſters

(t) *Primùm quando homo peccat videtur ei importabile, proceſſu temporis grave videtur: paulò poſt & leve judicat, & cùm crebrò illius verberetur, vulnera non ſentit, verbera non attendit. In brevi verò temporis ſpacio, non ſolùm non ſentit, ſed & placet, & dulce ſit quod amarum erat, & aſperum vertitur in ſuave. Ad extremum non poteſt avelli, quia conſuetudo vertitur in naturam; & quod priùs ad faciendum erat impoſſibile jam impoſſibile eſt ad omittendum.* Bernard, De Conſc. c. 3. pag. 1109.

cannot let men quietly alone in the commission of it; who never lookt so far as to behold that eternal death and destruction that is threatned to be brought upon the workers of iniquity; these are at peace because they do not apprehend what reason they have to be troubled: there is sufficient cause of grief and fear, and horrour, onely they want an eye to see it, so as to be indeed affected. There are some that are such fools, as to make a mock of sin, and count it a pastime to do wickedly. These do no more understand what sin is, nor the Hell which the Holy God has entail'd upon it, than the mad-man understands what he does *when he casts Fire-brands, and Arrows, and Death, and saith am I not in sport*, Prov. 26. 18. Others though far from being indeed justified, think they are righteous; though sick after a deadly manner, yet imagine they are whole, and undervalue the great Physitian. Both these sort of Persons have peace, but 'tis without ground, for the former do grosly mistake sin, and the later do as grosly mistake themselves.

2. That peace of Conscience is false, *where the strong man armed keeps possession*: where Satan works and rules without resistance. Our Lord sayes *When the strong man armed keepeth his Palace, his goods are in peace*, Luk. 11. 21. By the strong man we are to understand the Devil; by his Palace we are to understand the sinners heart; because as a King reigns and commands all, (especially in his Palace) so the Devil bears sway in the hearts of the ungodly. And a false peace and quiet, is the great means whereby the Devils Rule and Government is upheld. If you are careless and unconcerned whom you are led by, 'tis certain that the Devil leads you; for none are led by the Spirit

of God, without great sollicitousness, and fear of being misguided; and strong cryes that they may be guided by his counsel unto his Kingdom and Glory. Satan is called *the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit which worketh in the Children of Disobedience.* If you make nothing of disobeying the Word of God, if you walk *according to the course of this world, and fulfill the desires of the flesh, and the carnal mind*, Eph. 2. 2, 3. 'tis a sign, that Satan does command you, and your peace is far from being true.

3. That peace of Conscience is false, *where there is a walking after the imagination of the evil heart.* Those words do sound like Thunder, Dreadfully rattling in the air; Deut. 29. 19, 20. *And it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine heart. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousie, shall smoake against that man; and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall lye upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under Heaven.* The heart of man is fooliſh, deceitful, wicked, desperately wicked; 'tis a very sore judgment to be given up to our own hearts lusts, and to be suffered to walk after our own counsels. Sinners need not other enemies, they are forward enough to go astray of their own accord, and to ruine themselves; let them follow their own hearts, and they will infallibly come to Hell in the conclusion. If any therefore do walk in the way of their hearts, and please and gratifie their own sinfull affections, and say they shall have peace; they speak without book, without Gods book I am sure.

4. That

4. That peace of Conscience is false, *where the soul is intoxicated with sensuall Delights and Pleasures.* Thus the rich man was at peace, whose ground brought forth plentifully, who resolved to pull down his barns and to build greater, that he might bestow all his Fruits and his Goods: and since there were Goods sufficient for many years; he was clearly for *taking his Ease, for Eating and Drinking and making merry*, Luk. 12. 16.----19. One great cause of *Sodoms* security, was, their giving themselves over unto sensuallity: Whoredom and Gluttony and Drunkenness, do take away the heart; such consider no more than if they were brutes, nay, they come short of brutes, even the most stupid of them. *Isa.* 1. 3. *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib, but* Israel *doth not know, my People doth not consider.* Sensual Pleasures, as also Worldly cares, do overcharge the heart, so that there is no trouble or concernedness about eternity; and while they dream not of any such thing, the day of the Lord does come on them like a snare. Luk. 21. 34, 35. *And take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfetting and drunkennesse and cares of this Life, and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole Earth.*

5. That peace of Conscience is false *which is built upon present dispensations of Providence.* Sinners are apt to argue wrong, both from prosperity and from adversity, that their state is good, and so put a cheat upon their own Souls. Some are perswaded that because the Lord loads them with external blessings, this is a certain sign of his love. But the Holy Ghost informs us, *that the ungodly prosper in the World, and increase in*

Riches

Richer, that they are not in trouble like other men, that they have more than Heart could wiſh, Pſal. 73. 12. *Daniel* tells us, that *even Kingdoms are given to the baſeſt of men,* Dan. 4. 17. *Luther* ſaid concerning the (u) *Turkiſh Empire that it was but a morſel caſt unto a Dog.* And if whole Kingdoms are given to the ungodly, who can argue himſelf a Saint, and loved of God, from his worldly enjoyments? 'tis not the having of the World, but ſitting looſe from it, looking upon our ſelves as Strangers and Pilgrims in it, and improving it for God, that will argue we are indeed his Children.

On the other ſide ſome are perſwaded, becauſe afflicted at preſent, that it will be well with them in the Life to come. But wicked men may alſo be afflicted. *God does diſtribute ſorrows to them in his Anger, ſo that they are as ſtubble before the Wind, and as chaffe which the ſtorm carrieth away,* Job 21. 17, 18. 'Tis not then our being corrected that will prove us Children but our receiving of Correction and being humbled and reformed by it; though never ſo often in the furnace, if we are not at all Refined we are but Reprobate Silver.

6. That Peace of Conſcience is falſe *which is built upon External profeſſion and Priviledges.* Thus of old many becauſe they *were called Jews, did reſt in the Law & made their boaſt of God,* though at the ſame time they did break the Law, and diſhonoured God by their preſumptuous Tranſgreſſions, Rom. 2. 17. 23. Many

(u) *Turcicum imperium quantum eſt, nihil eſt niſi panis mica quam dives pater familias projicit canibus.* Luther. Tom. 2. in Gen. in cap. 21.

now

now a dayes are called Christians, and beguile themselves with an empty name. It will not advantage any to name the name of Christ, if they will not depart from iniquity; to call him Lord, Lord, if they are resolved still to rebell against him. They had great Peace and confidence, who said *Lord, Lord, we have Eat and Drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets.* And yet both their peace and confidence were without ground, the door is shut against them, they are excluded from the Kingdom; for, they were notwithstanding all their Profession, workers of iniquity, *Luke* 13.26, 27. By such a profession iniquity has the greater aggravation, (*w*) he is most inexcusably ungodly, who has most of the form, but nothing of the Power of Godliness.

7. That peace of Conscience is false, that is *built upon External Righteousnesse, and escaping the more grosse pollutions of the World.* The Apostle *Paul* before his Conversion, *was, touching the Righteousness of the Law blameless,* Phil. 3.6. that is, his Conversation was so agreeable to the letter of the Law, and so free from any foul and scandalous sin, that men could not blame him. But though he was thus *blameless*, yet he was *graceless*; and though he thought himself to be alive, and his state to be good and safe, yet he was deceived, as he found afterwards. That *Pharisee* had a false peace, who said, *God I thank thee, I am not as other*

(*) *Nos vero quid respondere pro nobis possumus? tenemus Symbolum & evertimus confitemur munus salutis pariter & negamus. Ac per hoc ubi est Christianitas nostra, qui ad hoc tantummodo, Sacramentum salutis accipimus, ut majore postea prævaricationis scelere peccemus?* Salvian. *De Gub. Dei.* l. 5. pag. *mihi*, 195,

men are, Extortioners, unjuſt, Adulterers, or even as this Publican. I faſt twice in the week, and give Tithes of all that I poſſeſs, Luke 18. 11. but all this was inſufficient to prove him juſtified.

There were two great faults in the Righteouſneſs of the Phariſees, and of all thoſe who reſemble them. One is that their Righteouſneſs was only external, ſo their lives were but blameleſſe, they minded not what luſts reigned in their Hearts. The other is, that their Righteouſneſs was truſted, in as that which was ſufficient to commend them unto God, whereupon they ſlighted the ſufferings and ſatisfaction of Chriſt. 'Tis unreaſonable for any to be at peace who go no further than a Phariſee, (if they go quite ſo far;) for our Lord ſpeaks expreſſely; *Mat.* 5. 20. *Except your Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

8. That peace of Conſcience is falſe, *that is founded upon ſome luzy wiſhes after Grace and Holineſſe.* There may be in unregenerate Hearts, eſpecially at ſom times, ſome pangs of deſire and inclinations to that which is good, but their deſires to continue bad, are ſtronger and do bear down all their inclinations to good which are much more feeble. *Agrippa* cryed out to *Paul* before a great multitude, and before *Feſtus* who a little before had charged both *Paul*, and conſequently Chriſtianity it ſelf with madneſs. *Almoſt thou perſwadeſt me to be a Chriſtian*, Act. 26. 28. Here was an inclinableneſs to Religion, but 'twas born down by a ſtronger propenſion to Worldly greatneſs and Pleaſures. A Woman may have ſome kind of good will, and Affection for a Perſon, and yet when it comes to the upſhot, refuſe to have him for an Husband; ſo ſinners

sinners may have some fluttering good thoughts and wishes for Christ and Grace, and yet utterly refuse to give themselves wholly to the Lord Jesus, or to be indeed and throughout sanctified.

Oh how many that say they desire after Grace, and to be rid of sin, are deceived in and by themselves? they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. Sin in the general they desire to be freed from, but come to particular sins which are for their profit, for their credit among carnal men, for their ease and pleasure, these they won't let go. Not considering who Christ is, they are inclined to him; but when they are told, that as he is a Redeemer, so a Ruler, and that he must bring their very Thoughts and Affections into captivity and obedience, that they must submit to the holiest Commands, and not be ashamed or afraid to confess Him, though it cost them never so dear. Here they make a demurr, & then have no real mind to be his Disciples. Oh deceive not your selves with lazy desires after Holiness, where there is a more vehement and fixed desire to wallow still in your filthyness and pollutions.

9. That peace of Conscience is false which *is founded upon some confused and general apprehensions of the mercy of God in Christ; but this use onely is made of this mercy, encouragement is taken from it to continue in sin.* 'Tis the commonest thing in the World for sinners to gagg their Consciences with the mercy of God and the Death of Christ. *They have sinned*, but *God is Merciful*, and *Christ has dyed for sinners*, even for the chief of them. And upon this they quiet themselves; they use these Truths as charms to cast Conscience into a sleep, that it may not be disturbed it self, nor disturb them. But such would do well to consider, that though the Scripture speak glorious things of Divine

Grace

Grace and Mercy; yet there is not in the whole Book of God one promise of Mercy made to sinners who are Resolved to go on still in their wickedness. The Lord will not save the ungodly *in* their sins, but *from* their sins; and if they will not be saved from Sin, they shall not be delivered from Wrath.

Where God does proclaim his Name: *The Lord Merciful and Gracious, long-suffering, abundant in loving kindness, goodness and truth, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin, keeping Mercy for thousands,* to rap off the fingers of presumptuous Souls from catching hold of what is not their Portion; 'tis added, *and that will by no means clear the guilty,* Exod. 34. 6, 7. *Guilty* does not Relate unto past Guilt, for that is supposed in that expression, *Forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin.* But by Guilty we are to understand them who are Resolved to Contract fresh guilt by an Obstinate continuance in evil doing; while they are of this mind, they have nothing to do with Mercy and Christ, for they prefer their Lusts before both, and so are unlikely to be the better for either hereafter; since because of both they presume to grow worse and worse at present.

10. That Peace of Conscience is false, *where the Sinners heart is afraid of a searching Ministry.* 'Tis said concerning the Prophet *Amos, that the Land was not able to bear his words,* Amos 7. 10. Which Argued, though *Israel* was secure, yet their security was Carnal and groundless. Sincerity loves plain dealing, but Falshood is afraid of it. If you cannot endure these Preachers that Rebuke sharply, that apply home, that threaten terribly, that warn faithfully, that examine and try impartially; 'tis a sign your Peace is Founded upon the Sand, and quickly your Building will be overthrown.

thrown. (x) If those Preachers are most acceptable that never come within a Mile of your Conscience but leave you asleep as they found you, how certain is it that the Blind lead the Blind, and though they go jolly together, yet they are going towards perdition. 'Tis a startling place, *Jer.* 5. 30, 31. *A wonderful and an horrible thing is committed in the Land*: why, what's the Matter? *The Prophets Prophesie falsly, and my People love to have it so.* I must add also, that though you do attend upon the most awakening Ministry, if you please your selves with giving a bare attendance, and with countenancing the strictest ways; but in the mean while you apply Truths to others, *this concerns such and such*, but take no notice how you are concerned your selves; let me tell you plainly, that your Peace is not right, but a most dangerous stupidity.

Thus have I described and Discovered what is a false Peace of Conscience. In the next place I am to shew you how unreasonable 'tis to give Entertainment unto such a kind of Peace.

1. *Conscience is at Peace, but God speaks trouble.* When sinners bless themselves God curses them; when they promise much good to themselves, God threatens ten thousand times more evil. The *Psalmist* tells us, that the Reason why many ungodly ones are secure, is,

(x) *Man cannot serve thee, let him go*
And serve the swine, there there is his delight,
He doth not like this Vertue, no;
Give him his dirt to wallow in all night:
These Preachers make
His head to shoot and ake.
Herbert, p. 93.

because

because *they think God to be altogether such an one as themselves*, Psal. 50. 21. They see no evil in sin, and they think the Lord sees none neither; they love sin, and they think God does not so much hate it, or at least, that he will connive at *their* wickedness. Can there be a more gross mistake? And how unreasonable is that Peace which is grounded upon such a mistake! No, secure Soul, know, God hates sin infinitely more than thou canst love it; and though thou flatter thy self in thy own eyes for the present, *He will Reprove thee, and set thy sins in Order before thee. Oh now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* All thy Blessing of thy self cannot make thee Blessed; all thy promises to thy self are vain, for thou canst not perform one of them. But the Lord both can and will fulfill his threatnings, and cause the curse denounced to overtake thee.

2. As long as a false Peace does last, *Satan is unlikely to be cast out.* Awakened and troubled Souls are afraid of being under his Power, and in time look after Deliverance; but they that are secure, will swallow his Baits, and follow this Enemy as long as he Sails with the stream of Corrupted Nature, and tempts them to that which their own wicked hearts delight in. And is it not sad to be in possession, and at the Command of so Cruel an Enemy? A Believers Heart is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, but the Heart of a wicked Man is the hole of the Old Serpent. Oh the danger that such are in to be stung to death, and destroyed every moment! The Jews did boulster up themselves with this, That they were *Abraham's* Seed, and they were foolishly confident that God was their Father: But Christ speaks plainly, *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do*, John

8.44. The Devil is a Father to all presumptuous souls, they do his Will, and will be his Prey.

3. This false Peace is *very provoking, and makes the breach between God and the Sinner still wider.* Barely to sin does not so much incense, as to make Light of it, and not to be troubled after sin has been committed. The Apostle tells us, that mens *hardness and impenitency, causes them to treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God*, Rom. 2.5. If a Servant commit a fault, and afterwards laugh in his Masters Face, this is more insufferable than the fault it self. Thou that canst forget God days without Number, and yet art at Peace; thou that canst neglect the Lord Jesus and his Benefits, and yet art at peace; that canst Live without the VVord and Prayer in secret, and when thou prayest with others, thy Heart is absent, and yet art at peace: Thou that canst be Intemperate, Sensual, Unclean, Covetous, Proud, Slothful, and yet art at peace: Alas, how much is God thine Enemy; how bitterly dost thou provoke him unto Anger! The lighter sin is made of, the heavier 'twill be found, and the weightier Gods indignation.

4. This false Peace *will be but short*, Job 20.4,5. *Knowest not thou this of Old, since Man was placed upon the Earth, that the Triumphing of the wicked is but short, and the Joy of the Hypocrite but for a moment.* This false peace can last no longer than Life, and Life is hasting to a Conclusion, as the swift Ships unto the Haven, and as the Eagle does unto the Prey. How small is that satisfaction which the hungry man takes in a Dream of a Feast, *He Dreameth, saith the Prophet, and behold, he eateth, but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty,*

empty, Iſa. 29. 8. Secure Souls do Dream that God is a Friend, but when they awake they will find him an Enemy; they Dream that they are whole, but when they awake they will find that they are ſick; and if Hell wakes them they will find their caſe altogether Deſperate, and their Diſeaſe paſt Cure: They Dream that they are Rich and increaſed with good things, but when they awake they will perceive themſelves empty and miſerable. Falſe peace may fitly be compared to *a Night-viſion*, for as there is no real ground for it, ſo 'tis but of very ſhort continuance.

5. This falſe peace *is threatned with ſudden deſtruction.* Solomon tells us, *Prov.* 29. 1. *He that being often reproved hardneth his Neck ſhall ſuddenly be Deſtroyed, and that without Remedy.* And the Apoſtle ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 3. *When they ſhall ſay, Peace and Safety, then ſudden Deſtruction cometh upon them as travel upon a Woman with Child, and they ſhall not eſcape.* Have you never taken notice of a Man Labouring under the Falling-ſickneſs? He ſeems as well as any perſon in the World, eats as heartily, walks as ſtrongly as another; but upon a ſudden down he falls, foams at Mouth, beats his Breaſt, and becomes a ſpectacle of great horror. Sinners that have a falſe Peace, look chearfully, go up and down from day to day quietly, as if no danger were near them, but at length Death ſeizeth upon them, and it ſeizeth on them ſuddenly, for it finds them utterly unprepared, and the firſt death is immediately followed by the ſecond; and if we could ſee them in Hell, Ah, how ſhould we behold the Caſe altered! *How are they brought into Deſolation as in a moment, and utterly conſumed with terror!* Pſal. 73. 19. All their vain hope is turned into a moſt tormenting deſpair, all their falſe joy and peace

is changed into inconceivable agonies and vexation of Spirit.

6. This false peace of Conscience *will very much heighten the Torment that shall follow.* As Heaven will be the Sweeter to Believers, because of their foregoing Sorrows, Sufferings, and Temptations; so Hell will be the more Bitter to the Ungodly, because of their Confidence that they should scape it. They that have a false peace, do come many of them with an expectation to have the door of Heaven open to receive them: *Lord Lord open unto us,* as if they should say, Lord Lord, *We are at the door,* and therefore let us have admission into thy Kingdom. But when they find the door shut, and shut for ever against them; and instead of a place in Heaven, they are thrown down into one of the hottest places in Hell: Oh what weeping and wailing, will be the consequent! Death was the worse to the *Amalekite* that brought tidings of *Sauls* death to *David,* because he expected a reward for his news. 'Twas more grievous to *Agag* to be hewed in pieces by *Samuel* before the Lord, *when he came forth delicately, and said, surely the Bitterness of Death is past.* So Hell will be the more intolerable unto them, who fully reckoned upon it that they were secured from those burnings.

When a sinner that is in a false peace all his days, is chased out of the world; and beyond his expectation, nay, contrary to his expectation is turned into a flaming Hell: We may conceive him thus speaking. *Little, ah little indeed, did I think that this was the place I was going to. I did not imagine the Judge had been so Righteous, the Trial at his Tribunal so Strict; and that so few would have been saved. I did not imagine 'twas so ordinary for Souls to be deceived, and that there*

there was so much counterfeit grace in the world. I thought my self safe, when I was farthest from it; and never perceived my mistake till now: 'tis too late to correct it. I dreamt of Heaven, but am in the lowest Hell; I hoped to be saved, but must be a damned wretch to all Eternity. Oh that I had waked before! How happy had I been, if a right trouble of Conscience had been in the room of a false peace! Wo is me that I flattered, and by flattering did undo my self! And now what course shall I take? Ah this totally confounds me, that no course can be taken for my relief. Heaven now I see, but so far off that I can never get thither; and out of Hell there is no Redemption. So much be spoken by way of reproof to them whose Consciences are in peace, but that peace has no good ground upon which 'tis builded.

4. They are to be reproved *who offer violence to their Consciences*, and very ordinarily do sin against them. Conscience speaks once, twice, thrice, speaks in the name of the Lord, tells them of Life and Death; of the Life that will be lost, and the Death which will be incurred by sin; and yet these Transgressors go resolutely on in an evil course, and hate to be reformed. They do in effect speak to their Consciences as the children of *Judah* did to the Prophet, Jer. 44. 16. *As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.* Let Such consider and that seriously.

1. Sinning against Conscience *is the way to Cauterize and Sear it.* 'Tis bad to have a *dul Conscience*, which does its office so remissly, that no good effect at all follows; this onely Almost perswades a man to that

which is good, onely Almost dissuades a man from that which is evil. 'Tis worse to have a *stupid Conscience*, which takes no notice of thousands of sins, unless some very crying ones be committed, and that commission followed with some grievous Plagues. But 'tis worst of all, to have a *seared Conscience*, which is not at all moved though there be a giving full way to the most foul abomination. (y) Such a kind of Conscience, as one observes, is to be found especially in those who have been enlightned, but contrary to that Light do sell themselves to do wickedly. Where Conscience is seared, Light is extinguished: there is no Grief or Shame because of sin, but an impudence and rejoycing in evil; the mind is reprobate, and the affections vile, and iniquity is committed with Greediness. Even some Philosophers have called this searedness ἀναλγησία, because the heart is senseless like a stone, and ὑπερδοσία because such sinners become *like brute Beasts made to be taken and destroyed*, 2 Pet. 2. 12.

A Sinner whose Conscience is seared as with an hot iron, how does he stand ready for the Devils service! and commonly he is employed in the vilest pieces of Satans Drudgery. When *Richard* the third did Murther his two Nephews, that he might come to the Throne; he employed a couple of villains to perpetrate that murther, who were so senseless as to stick at nothing. When *Belzebub* has any eminently and egregiously odious work of darkness to be done, he does set a man with a seared Conscience about it; such an one is likely to do the business effectually. Such Transgressors declare their sin as *Sodom*, they openly

(y) *Cauteriata conscientia est quæ nullâ ratione commovetur, ad atrocissimis quidem flagitiis; & in iis præcipiti reperitur qui postquam fuerint illuminati, scelerata vitæ sese dediderunt.* Amef. *De Conscient. lib.* 1. *c.* 15.

bid defiance to Heaven; and how soon may the Just and Jealous God by some remarkable stroke destroy them. What a madness is it to sin against Conscience, since this has so great a tendency unto the searing of it!

2. Sinning against Conscience *may bring you to despair.* If Conscience be not seared by Sin, it may be so wounded, as that a cure may be conceived impossible. The Soul in a great agony may cry out, *My breach is wide like the Sea, and who can heal me?* Great is the sin, great is the horrour of Despair. What the Poet sayes concerning *Envy*, may very truly be applied unto *Desperation*: *Siculi non invenere Tyranni Majus tormentum.* The *Sicilian* Tyrants (though infamous for their cruelty) never invented a Torment comparable. When Despair has once seized upon the Conscience, then indeed there is Hell above ground. A Despairing sinner is the truest and likest picture of a damned Reprobate. The deplorableness of such a state wherein hope leaves a sinner, and he gives over himself and all for lost, I shall set forth in these particulars,

1. A Despairing Conscience *remembers God, and is troubled*; it sees frowns in his Face, and how terrifying is his Voice! *for he speaks* unto such sinners *in his wrath, and vexes them in his sore displeasure.* Then sayes *Luther*, (z) *There is true Horrour, when the*

(z) *Verus terror nascitur cum Dei irati vox auditur, h. e. cum pulsatur conscientia. Tum enim Deus qui antea nusquam erat est ubique, & qui prius dormire videbatur, omnia audet & videt: & ira ejus sicut ignis ardet, furit, & occidit.* Luther. Tom. 1. in Gen. c. 12.

voice of an angry God is heard, and perceived by the Conscience; then the Lord who was thought to be no where, is every where; and he that did seem to sleep before, does now hear and see all things; and his Anger like the Fire does burn and rage and kill all before it. A despairing sinner apprehends what a terrible enemy the Lord is, and then to think that this Lord is his Enemy, and that justly; and withall, that he is now irreconcilable, oh how does this confound him.

2. A Despairing Conscience *looks upon the creatures and findes them all miserable comforters. Judas* in temptation thought thirty pieces of silver a great matter, but when he was seized upon with Despair, he flung away the silver as that which was altogether unprofitable. *Mat.* 27. 3. 5. Love of money had wounded him, and money it self could not heal him, nor buy a medicine for him. Riches say to the despairing Conscience; We are not able to deliver in this day of the Lords anger: Pleasures say, Help is not to be found in us, 'tis not in our power to sweeten that cup of trembling, which is filled with the wine of Gods indignation. Honours and worldly Greatness say, We cannot skreen thee from Him that is higher than the highest, and who *if he will not withdraw his anger, the proudest helpers must stoop under him,* Job. 9. 13.

3. A despairing Conscience *remembers sin and those threatnings that are denounced against it, and is overwhelmed.* Oh the mountains of guilt which it does behold! and these are high; trespasses are grown up unto the Heavens, and then it applies all the Curses, all the evils that it reads in the Book of God unto it self: *there is a roll opened before it, written within and without, with Lamentations and Mourning and Wo:* to

allude

allude to that place, *Ezek.* 2. *ult.* Wherever the despairing sinner goes he is dog'd, and followed with Legions of sins, and Conscience is still tormenting it self with such sad thoughts. How shall all these be answered for? How shall that vengeance be undergone which so many iniquities and so heinous, do deserve?

4. A Despairing Conscience *looks upon Christ and the Gospel, and is more than ordinarily tormented to think there is help for others, but for it self none to be found.* It calls to mind that once the door was open, and the sinner was invited to come in but refused, but now concludes the door is shut eternally; once the Spirit strived, but being resisted, is departed for good and all, so as never to return again. Once sayes the despairing soul, I had a day of Grace, but I did not know it, I did not improve it; but now am overtaken by an Everlasting Night, and shall never see day more. The Prince of Peace, the Gospel of Peace are hid from me, the hopes of Peace are quite gone. I have outdone the very Devils themselves, and may expect if it be possible, to be more miserable; they never refused one offer of Mercy, but I thousands; they never slighted a pardon, but I have slighted it, and was unwilling to be reconciled to God, they never rejected a Redeemer, but I have rejected him, and preferr'd vanity, nay, sin which is of such a damnable Nature, before the only Saviour.

5. A despairing Conscience *remembers Death and Judgement, and Eternity, and then there is even a roaring out for Anguish*, something like unto the yellings of those that actually are in the burning lake. Ah how shall I bear the wrath of the Almighty when all of it shall be stirr'd up? What ease can I expect in Everlasting

lasting Flames? How shall I bear the society of the Devil and his Angels? How shall I endure to be tormented for ever, in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb? *Rev.* 14. 10. 'Tis not more certain I must dye, than 'tis certain I must be judged; 'tis not more certain I must be judged, than 'tis certain I must be damned; 'tis not more certain I must be damned, than 'tis certain that my damnation will be Everlasting. This is the Language of a despairing sinner: and since to despair is to be upon such a wrack, how are they to be reproved that sin against Conscience which has a tendency to despair?

6. They are to be reproved, *who go about to wound and to ensnare the Consciences of Others.* How careful was the Apostle *not to cast a snare* upon the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 7. 35. nor to enjoyn that as necessary where the Lord had not imposed a necessity, and a little after he sticks not to say, that *they who sin against the Brethren and wound their weak Conscience, do sin against Christ*, 1 Cor. 8. 12. And if I am not by an imprudent use of my Christian liberty, to embolden another to venture upon sin against Conscience, surely much lesse may I do this either by constraint or by perswasion. If it argue want of Love, and be a great sin, to impair the Estate, to blemish the reputation, to hurt the body of my Brother, how much worse than all this, is it to wound his Conscience? Those who have no mercy to the Souls of Others, surely have little to their Own, and they will make bold with their own Consciences, who have no care, no tenderness in reference to the Consciences of their Brethren.

Several sorts of persons are here concerned, as being injurious to others Consciences.

1. *False*

1. *Falſe Prophets are injurious to the Conſciences of others*: Theſe do ſpeak perverſe things to draw away Diſciples after them, the Apoſtle deals very ſharply with theſe, he calls them Dogs, and bids us beware of them. *Phil.* 3. 2. *Beware of Dogs, beware of evil workers.* No wonder that *Paul* ſtiles them *Dogs*, ſince Chriſt before had call'd them *Wolves*, nay *ravening Wolves.* Falſe Prophets, eſpecially ſtrike at Conſcience, and endeavour to miſ-inform That; and if once they can prevail ſo as to make the Conſcience put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs, a lye for Truth, and Truth for a Lye; how may ſouls be carried away! truly ſo far at length as to fall into damnable Hereſies, and alſo into groſſe impieties and wickedneſs. Thoſe deceived and deceiving ones ſpoken of, 2 Pet. 2. *They walked in the luſts of Uncleanneſs, they counted it pleaſure to Riot, their Eyes were full of Adultery and could not ceaſe from ſin, their Hearts was exerciſed with Covetous practices, and while they talked of Liberty they were themſelves the Servants of Corruption.*

2. *Dawbers with untempered Mortar are concerned*; Conſcience is little beholding to them, *for they heal the wound of it ſlightly crying Peace, Peace, where there is no Peace, Jer.* 6. 14. How miſerable is the condition of unfaithful Miniſters, and likewiſe of thoſe Souls that belong to their charge! The Watchman that gives not warning, the Blood of Souls indeed will lye upon his Head, but this implies that ſuch Souls do alſo perish. *Ezek.* 33. 7, 8. *O Son of Man I have ſet thee a Watchman unto the Houſe of* Iſrael, *therefore thou ſhalt Hear the Word at my Mouth, and ſhalt warn them from me. When I ſay to the wicked man thou ſhalt ſurely*

ſurely dye, if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man ſhall dye in his iniquity, but his Blood will I require at thine hand. If an unskilful Phyſician has need of a new Church-yard, what ſhall be ſaid of an unskilful or unfaithful Preacher? I will not affirm he has need of a new Hell, but I am ſure he will help very much to fill the Old one. Thoſe that make the way to Heaven broad and eaſie, and regeneration needleſs, and the Death of Chriſt an encouragement to continue in ſin, and the Mercy of God ſo large that 'twill put up any thing, and will certainly be extended unto any that cry Lord have mercy upon us: Theſe are Dawbers, enemies to Conſcience, *they build a Wall, that ſhall be rent with a ſtormy wind in fury, and brought down to the ground, and they ſhall be conſumed in the midſt of it*, Ezek. 13. 13. 14.

3. *All enticers unto Wickedneſs are cruel Enemies to the Conſciences of others.* If there be a Devil incarnate, he is ſuch an one whoſe buſineſſe is to tempt thoſe to ſin whom he has to deal with. When any perſwade you to intemperance, to uncleanneſs, to injuſtice, or any other iniquity, they do in effect perſwade you to make deep wounds and gaſhes in your own Spirits, to wrong your own Souls, and to go along with them towards the lake that burns, and burns for ever with Fire and Brimſtone. Oh the cruelty of thoſe that ſtir up others to ſin! Oh the folly of them that are prevailed with by theſe wretched and evil inſtruments of the Prince of Darkneſs! I have done with that firſt Uſe by way of reproof.

USE. II. Shall be of Direction. And here I am to ſhew, firſt how ſecure Conſciences may be awaken-

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ed and wounded, and ſecondly how wounded Conſciences may be cured and comforted.

1. How *ſecure Conſciences may be awakened.* Though there is many a bad Spirit which does prevail at this day, yet none does more prevail than the *Spirit of Slumber*: cloſed Eyes, drowſie Souls, ſenſeleſs Hearts are every where to be met with. Though ſo much hath been ſpoken, though ſo much has been done, though ſo much has been felt and ſuffered in order unto our awakening; yet whoſe Conſcience is indeed ſtarled? *Prophets have been full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of Judgment and of might to declare unto evil doers their Tranſgreſſion and their ſin*, Mic. 3. 8. Calamity and Judgments have been ſtrange, unwonted and extraordinary, and it might have been thought that ſuch a Plague and Flames as have raged in *London*, would hardly have left one ſecure ſinner, but all would have learned to fear that God, who is ſo Righteous, and who knows how to take a courſe with them that provoke him unto jealouſie. But alas, like *Pharoah* of old, upon the *leaſt reſpite* the generality of ſinners do harden their Hearts, and their Conſciences ſleep ſounder than ever. Now in order unto your being awakened, follow theſe directions:

1. Think of that *Great and Glorious Majeſty which by ſin is affronted, and which all the ſin that is in the World is committed againſt*; He is the *bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; *he is cloathed with Honour and with Majeſty, and covers himſelf with light as with a Garment; the Heaven is his Throne, the Earth is his Foot-ſtool; the whole world in compariſon with him is but as the Bucket, and the ſmall duſt upon the Balance, and all the Nations of the Earth be-*

fore

fore him are as nothing, and vanity, Iſa. 40. 15. 17. The greater the perſon is that is affronted, that affront is the greater crime. God is the higheſt and greateſt of all, Oh how vile and hainous a thing is it to ſin againſt him. Sinner! would'ſt thou have thy Conſcience awakened? believe ſeriouſly that *There is a God.* Oh what work would this Truth make were it but firmly credited! That famous *Bruce* of *Scotland* who (a) gained many thouſands of Souls to Chriſt; was wont to ſay, *I think it a great matter to believe that there is a God.* And not only believe that God is, but that he is ſo Glorious as his word proclaims him, this may make thee tremble.

Now no ſin in the World can be committed wherein this God is not concerned. Thoſe ſins againſt Man, are more againſt God than againſt man: therefore *David* after he had murthered *Uriah,* and defiled *Bathſheba,* looks beyond theſe, as high as God himſelf and cryes out, *againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this Evil in thy ſight,* Pſal. 51. 4. He takes notice how God was ſtruck at in that injury he had done to his Neighbour, and is wholly ſwallowed up in that conſideration, and this helped very much his awakening and contrition. To how many thouſands of Millions do all thy ſins amount? and there is not one of them but has been an act of Rebellion againſt the

(†) Altare Damaſcenum.

(a) Robertus Bruſius. *Vir genere & virtute nobilis, Majeſtate vultus venerabilis, qui plura animarum millia Chriſto lucrifecit, cujus anima ſi ullius mortalium (abſit verbo invidia) ſedet in cœlo Sibus.*

Lord

Lord of Heaven, if this were pondered, it might cool thy Courage and trouble thy Conscience.

2. Think how *dreadful the Power of this God, and his wrath being joyned together must needs prove*: in Scripture these two are joyned and both together are engaged against the ungodly, Ezra 8. 22. *The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him, but his Power and his Wrath is against all them that forsake him.* If wrath be without Power 'tis contemptible; if Power be without wrath it may not be at all hurtful, but when Wrath and Power meet they may well be trembled at. The Wrath of a King is as the Roaring of a Lyon, as the messengers of Death. What then is the Anger of God? this wrath to shew the heat and greatness of it, is likened unto Fire, and it burns worse than any other Fire, for it burns to Hell it self, Deut. 52. 32. *A Fire is kindled in mine Anger and it shall burn to the lowest Hell.* And if you would understand the Power of this Anger, know that there is no withstanding it, and Oh how dismall are the effects of it in both Worlds!

This Anger of God has brought upon sinners Cursing, and Vexation, and Rebuke, and has made them quickly to perish because of the Wickedness of their doings: it has smitten them with a Consumption and a Fever, and an Inflammation, and Extreme Burning; with the Pestilence, and Sword, and Blasting, and Mildew, and has made the Heaven over Sinners Heads like Brass, and the Earth under their Feet like Iron. It has made them when they went out one way against their Enemies, to be smitten and to flee seven wayes before them, and their carcasses to become meat to the Fowls of the Air, and the Beasts of the Earth. This Anger of God has stricken the ungodly; with madness and blindness, and astonishment of Heart. So

that

that life has been a burthen, no rest or ease at all could be found, so that in the morning they have said, would God it were Evening, and in the Evening would God it were morning, because of the fear and trembling of their Hearts, the failing of their Eyes, and the sorrow of their Minds. All this is spoken of at large, *Deut.* 28.

But these are not all, nor the most heavy effects of Divine displeasure. Indeed we are safe from mans Anger after Death, we cannot feel or be concerned at what Man can do when we are in the Grave. *There the Wicked cease from troubling, there the weary be at rest, there the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor.* Job 3. 17. 18. But Gods Anger will follow after us into the other World, and then will be found most heavy. That Wrath to come is most of all amazing, for then as it will be intollerable to be born, so 'twil be impossible to be appeased. Consider all this and be affrighted, and say with the Psalmist. *At thy Rebuke O God of Jacob, the stout Hearted are spoyled, none of the men of Might have found their Hands. Thou even thou art to be feared, who may stand in thy sight when once thou art Angry?*

3. That Conscience may be awakened, consider seriously *that you are alwayes under the Eye and Power of God, so that he can do with you what he pleases.* You cannot hide your selves from him, nor defend your selves against him. *Though you dig into Hell, thence can his hand take you, though you could climb up to Heaven,* and make your nest among the Starrs, *yet thence he can bring you down, Amos* 9. 2. Your breath is in His hand, dare you to provoke him? and he can take it out of your Nostrils, without asking you leave, or giving you the least warning. You have

no

no Leaſe of your Lives, but are Tenants at will in theſe Cottages of Clay; the Lord can turn you out, and require your Souls at your hands at his own pleaſure.

God has moſt Sovereign Power, he is the onely abſolute Monarch, becauſe all others are ſubject to himſelf. VVhom he will he Kills, whom he will he keeps alive, whom he will he ſets up, whom he will he puts down, whom he will he ſaves, and whom, and when he will he can deſtroy for ever. *He does according to his pleaſure in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay to him, What doſt thou?* Dan. 4. 35. Surely 'tis not ſafe by thy ſtupidneſs of Conſcience any longer to engage this God againſt thee.

4. Firmly Believe, that *'tis not more certain thou art a ſinner, than 'tis certain that the Lord of Heaven is diſpleaſed with Thee, Thee in particular.* Thou that haſt an hard Heart, and a ſenſeleſs Conſcience, I am to tell thee heavy Tidings, Gods Soul does hate Thee, and he is Angry with thee every day. If God ſhould permit one of thy Old Companions in Wickedneſs to riſe from the Dead, to tell thee that his wrath abides upon thee, and that thou art making haſte unto the place of Torment, would not this ſtartle thee? Or if an Angel from Heaven ſhould meet thee with a Flaming Sword in his Hand, and tell thee, the way that thou takeſt is perverſe before God; and naming thy Name, *John, Thomas, Richard*, ſhould ſay plainly, that the Lord is thine Enemy; how would this affect thee? VVhy, the Word tells thee this; and that is *a more ſure word of Prophecy.* How expreſly is it ſaid, *Wo to the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him*: Upon the wicked *God ſhall rain Snares, Fire and Brimſtone, and an horrible Tempeſt,*

this shall be the Portion of their Cup, Psal. 11. 6.

5. Look upon *God as the Lord of Hosts*, that thy Conscience may shrink and be afraid. Many Legions of Angels are at his Service, his beck commands them, *they are his Ministers to do his pleasure*, *Psal.* 103. 21. And these Angels do so excell in strength, that *one of them* was able to destroy *in one Night, an hundred fourscore and five thousand* of the *Assyrian* Army, *Isa.* 37. 36. All the Devils in Hell God can Employ and they are very forward to be the Instruments of his Wrath and Revenge upon the workers of Iniquity. The Men of the Earth are at his Command, and he can stir up their Spirits, and bring whole Armies of them against the People of his Indignation. The Beasts of the Field, the Fowls of the Air; nay, the most inconsiderable Creatures he can make terrible, so as to tame the proudest of his Adversaries. Those Locusts spoken of by *Joel*, when God does Marshal them into an Army, how terrible are they? *Like the noise of Chariots on the tops of Mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a Flame of Fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong People set in Battel array, before their face the People shall be much pained, all Faces shall gather blackness*, Joel 2. 5, 6. The Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, and Stormy Winds fulfill Gods Word. The Thunder and the Lightnings say unto him, *Here we are*; being ready to consume the Rebellious against him. The Lord is very terrible in himself, oh dreadful to have an Omnipotent Enemy! But when besides his own Power, he has so great an Host at Command, how should sinners tremble before him!

6. Look

6. Look back and see *what Security has brought upon others.* Stupidness of Conscience has been the fore-runner of the most astonishing Judgments that ever were inflicted. Read the Story of the old World, and the Drowning of it: Was it not terrible, *when all the Fountains of the great Deep were broken up, and the Windows of Heaven were opened, and the Rain was upon the Earth for forty Days and forty Nights together,* Gen. 7. 11, 12? Oh, what crying, and what climbing was there to avoid that Deluge, but all in vain; the Waters prevailed exceedingly, fifteen Cubits above the highest Mountains, and all flesh dyed that moved upon the Earth: Fowl, Cattel, Beast, Creeping thing, *and every Man.* But Security went before this Flood that swept all away. *They Eat, they Drank, they Planted, they Builded, they Married, and were given in Marriage, even to the Day that* Noah *entred into the Ark.* The like sottishness and unsensibleness was in *Sodom* and *Gomorrah,* before the Lord Rained Fire and Brimstone, bringing Hell out of Heaven for their signal overthrow, who had been sinners before the Lord exceedingly. Like sins will have like ends; and if thy Conscience is stupid as the *Sodomites* were, thou mayst be destroyed suddenly, and signally as they were.

7. That Conscience may be awakened, consider *how unlikely 'tis that Divine Patience should last much longer towards you*: Do not think that his patience towards his Enemies will be like his Mercy towards his Children, and endure for ever. You have found him long-suffering, 'tis Foolish presumption to think he will be ever suffering. *Læsa Patientia fit furor,* Abused

Patience may quickly become Fury. *Hippolytus*, (b) in the Tragedy, when his Mother-in-Law made an Incestuous motion to him, wondred at the patience of Heaven, and that she was not presently struck dead with a Thunder-bolt. It may be Matter of great Admiration, that stupid sinners have been spared all this while: Oh, let them not reckon that they shall be still spared, though they continue in their provocations. Sottish and Senseless sinner! the Devil who temps thee to sin, would fain drag thee to Hell immediately; but 'tis that God whom thou offendest, that hinders him, and exercises forbearance, to see if at length thou wilt be led to Repentance.

But if thou art stupid still, God may quickly suffer Satan to have his will upon thee, and, which is worse, cause his own wrathful Vengeance to take hold on thee. Dost thou think that the Spirit of the Lord will still strive, if he meet with nothing but resistance? dost thou think that Mercy will still be offered if that Offer be nothing else but rejected? Dost thou think that the day of Grace will still continue if it be eat and drunk, and slept and play'd, and sinn'd away? Dost thou consider how easie 'tis for God to destroy thee? And if he does it, he will ease himself of a Burthen; *For he is pressed with thy Iniquities as a Cart is pressed that is full of sheaves*, Amos 2. 13. Nay, he threatens to do it, which should make thee (as secure as thou art) horribly afraid; concerning those Sinners that did *refuse* and *rebell*; that did refuse to turn, and did resolve

(b) *Magne regnator Deûm*
Tam lentus audis scelera tàm lentus vides!
Et quando sævâ fulmina emittes manu,
Si nunc serenum est?
Seneca.

to

to rebell: *Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty One of* Israel, *Ah, I will ease me of mine Adversaries, and avenge me on my Enemies,* Isa. 1. 24.

8. That Conscience may be awakened, *Behold and Know thy self.* To understand our selves is a great part of Wisdom; to live and die Ignorant of our selves, (c) is not to see what's our Happiness, what's our Misery, till 'tis too late to obtain the one, to avoid the other. How do the ungodly mistake every thing! They mistake sin, for they think it pleasant: they mistake the World, for they think 'twill make them happy; they mistake Satan, for they think there is no harm in yielding to his Temptations; they mistake the Lord, for they think him an hard Master, and his Commands grievous; they mistake themselves, for they think they are what they are not, and that they are not what they are. Look therefore into your selves, Sinners, and there are five things you should take notice of, which may help very much to startle Conscience.

1. Take Notice of *your Guilt.* Ah, how have your offences abounded? You have Sinned alone, you have Sinned in Company, you have Sinned in every place, in every Relation, in every Capacity, in every Employment; nay, you have Sinned in every Duty that you have performed unto God himself. How should such Guilty Souls tremble! We blame the stupidness of a Malefactor,

(c) *Miser nimium,*
Qui cunctis notus moritur,
Ignotus moritur sibi.
Seneca.

that is in Prison for several Crimes, the least of which is enough to Hang him. Oh, blame thy self for being unconcerned at thy many thousands of Transgressions, the least of which is enough to damn thee.

2. Take Notice of *thy weakness.* Art thou, O Man, a Match for God? *Hast thou an Arm like the Lord? Or canst thou Thunder with a voice like him? Canst thou deck thy self with Majesty and Excellency, and array thy self with Glory and Beauty? Canst thou cast abroad the Rage of thy Wrath, and behold every one that is proud, and abase him?* Job 40. 9, 10, 11. Poor VVorm, thou dwellest in a House of Clay, whose Foundation is in the dust, thou art no more able to stand against God, than dryed stubble before devouring flames, or Chaff before the fiercest VVhirlwind.

3. Take Notice of *thy Mortality*: How quickly may *thy breath go forth, and thou return to thy Earth, and all thy thoughts perish? Psal.* 146. 4. How soon maist thou be hid in the dust, and thy face bound in secret? Dost not thou Observe Men as great, as young, as rich, as strong as thy self carried to their Graves? VVhy should thy Conscience be secure, as if thou were sure to be out of the reach of Death for these several Years? It does infinitely concern thee to awake to Righteousness presently, and to work for God and for thy Soul, while 'tis day, for the Night is coming, is just at hand, and there is no VVisdom, nor working in the Grave, whither thou art apace going.

4. Take Notice of *the Immortality of thy better part,*

part, *thy Precious Soul*: (d) Thy Body indeed must lie senseless in the Grave till the last day, *but thy Spirit must return to God who gave it*. As the Spirits of Just Men immediately after death are made perfect in the Heavenly *Jerusalem*; so the spirits of the Ungodly are thrown into Hell when separated from their Bodies; for the soul has been the principal subject of sin, and most Active in wickedness, and therefore does more early begin to be tormented. The *Sodomites* are said to be now *suffering the Vengeance of eternal fire*, Jude 7. which shews plainly, that their Souls are now in Hell, for if their Bodies and Souls were asleep together, they would not truly be said to suffer that vengeance.

5. Take notice of *the eternal Duration both of Soul and Body after the Resurrection*: Body and Soul, which Death does part, must be joyned again; and as they have been Companions together in Sin, so they must share together in Everlasting Punishment. Thou maist be weary of thy Being, sinner, and wish thou hadst never had it, or that it might be taken away; but thy wish will not be granted. Thou must endure as long as God does, and since thou must Be for ever, Awake, awake, that thou maist not *be for ever miserable*.

9. That Conscience may be awakened, *Behold how the Judge stands before the Door*, James 5. 9. the coming of the Lord draws nigh, and is still nearer and

(d) 'Twas a notable saying and observation of *Hierocles* upon *Pythagoras*.

Οὐ βέλεται ὁ κακὸς ἀθάνατον εἶναι τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχήν, that is, *'Tis the wicked man that is unwilling his soul should be immortal.*

nearer. *Yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry*, Heb. 10. 37. Oh think of that day when the World shall be on Fire about your Ears, when the Lord shall come with Clouds and every Eye shall see Him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him; when the Sun shall become black as a sackcloth of hair, and the Moon shall be like blood; when the Heaven shall depart as a scroll when 'tis rolled together, and every Mountain and Island shall be removed out of their places; when the Lord Jesus shall sit upon his great white Throne, and all the dead both small and great shall stand before him, and shall be judged according to their works, *Rev.* 20. 11, 12. Consider seriously,

1. How *glorious the Judge will be at that day*: he will come attended with Legions of Angels. Oh the Majesty and Brightness of our Lord, when he shall appear the second time! he appeared the first time in the form of a Servant, because he was to be obedient unto Death for the sins of men; but then he will be seen as he is, 'twill be evident to all, that he is the Son of God, and ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης the Brightness of his Fathers glory.

2. How *powerful will this Judge be found*! All the Devils, and the Reprobate world will be then together, and yet they will not be able to make their part good against him; but he will Judge and Condemn, and put the Sentence which he passes upon them, in Execution.

3. How *Righteous will the whole proceeding of this Judge at that day be*! Every mouth shall be stopt, and every sinner speechless. Oh then the Evil of sin will

be

be made Manifest; and how Righteous 'tis for the Lord, to Sentence the Wicked unto Everlasting Fire. Whom He Condemns, every one will Condemn; and they shall not choose but Condemn themselves.

4. After the Judge has past Sentence, *he will be inexorable*: no Cryes, no Tears will prevail with him to Repeal it. Those that then are Condemned, can never be Justified, can never be saved. Oh what is that Misery which is Extream, as to the Measure; and as to the Duration of it, Everlasting!

5. Thou in Particular must give Account of thy self unto this Judge. All must appear before the Judgement seat of Christ, and that *All* includes thee. *Everyone of us must give account of himself to God*, Rom. 14. 12. And Oh secure sinner, if all must be judged according to their Works, begin now to tremble that thy works have been all so bad; what kind of Sentence is likely to be past upon thee? Is thy Worldliness, and Uncleanness, and neglect of God and Christ and Duty; and thy stupidness of Conscience, notwithstanding all this, likely to be rewarded with Heaven? No, no, that which is thy due (and thy due shall be given thee) is everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power.

10. Take some encouragement, *that 'tis not too late to awake as yet, though Conscience hitherto has slept securely.* Thy Glasse is not yet run, thy Sun is not yet set, thy Day is not yet ended; there may be possibly an Inch of thy Span of time remaining; Oh sleep no longer, but up and be doing thy main business.

When

When the ship was drowning the Marriners come to *Jonah*, with a just rebuke, *What meanest thou O sleeper?* Jon. 1. 6. When Souls are sinking, and when sinners are damning, there is much more reason to say to Conscience, what meanest Oh Sleeper! Awake before it be quite too late. Call upon God to awaken you throughly; he can make the sleepy, nay, the dead to hear his voice: Joh. 5. 25. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.* So much be spoken (and Lord make what has been spoken Effectual!) to awaken secure Consciences.

In the second place I am to shew how wounded and awakened Consciences may be Cured and Comforted. And here it will be needfull first to shew you some mistakes about trouble of Conscience, which are very common; Secondly to discover when Conscience is troubled after a right manner; Thirdly how Comfort is to be applied in that trouble.

For the first of these, namely, *the mistakes about trouble of Conscience*; they are these following.

1. That is not right trouble of Conscience *which is onely the product of, and lasts no longer than Affliction.* When *Pharoah* was under the smart of the Rod, he cryed out I have sinned; but this was not real trouble for sin, for as soon as ever the Rod is taken off, *Pharoah* is as resolved to sin as ever. The mettal while the Fire burns, is Liquid, and you may cast it into any form; but take away the Fire, and it becomes hard as ever. Such kind of mettall are many hearts, while in the Furnace of Affliction, how melted and tender

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they seem; but when taken out of that Furnace, then they quickly cool and become perhaps more obdurate than before. Who would have thought (though so indeed it was) that the *Israelites*, who when God slew them, did seek him, and returned and enquired early after him, and remembred that he was their Redeemer and their Rock; should all this while only *flatter him with their Lips, and that their Hearts should not be right with him nor stedfast in his Covenant*?

2. That is not right trouble of Conscience *which is only sorrow after the world*: (*) this kind of sorrow is so far from having a promise of life made to it, but the Apostle affirms, *it works death*, 2 Cor. 7. 10. There is a great sorrow in thy Heart, and it appears in thy very looks, but what is the cause of it? If hard times trouble thee, but an hard Heart is no affliction; Crosses and losses in the World perplex thee, but the losse of thy Soul, is not at all feared, neither is there any care taken to prevent it; if thy poverty in the World do grieve thee, but thou dost not sorrow at all because destitute of the true Riches, how canst thou call any of this a right trouble? The *Israelites* did weep and *Howl*, but the cause was, they wanted *Corn and Wine*, and so they had but these things in plenty, they could be well contented to live without God, *Hos.* 7. 13, 14. Every pensive sinner is not pe-

(*) *Tristitia mundi est quum propter terrenas afflictiones animo desponden & luctu opprimuntur; tristitia autem secundum Deum quæ Deum respicit, dum unicam miseriam ducunt excidisse à Dei gratiâ; ac timore judicii ejus perculsi, peccata sua lugent.* Calv.

nitent,

nitent, nor fit to be comforted; their very pensiveness is a very great sin, as long as sin is not, but only worldly crosses the cause of it.

3. That is not right trouble of Conscience, where *there is onely a slavish fear of punishment, but love to sin does still remain in strength.* Where there is slavish fear and no more, there is an hatred of God, and a secret wish to get from under his Power, the slave you know hates his Master, and wishes he might be at liberty, and never see or serve him more: there is also an hatred of the Commands of God, and a repining and murmuring at the strictness of them. Sin is dear as ever, & a grief there is because of those threats which terrifie and hinder the free commission of it. If such a Soul might have its wish, It should not be *Oh that I might be turned to God, and that my ways were directed to keep his Statutes!* but it should be, *Oh that I might have liberty to do as I list*, and that there were no such thing as the Word and Will of God to be observed! where such a Spirit is (which the Heart-searching God perfectly understands) abstaining from the outward act of sin, signifies not much. The Merchant in a Storm cannot be said to hate his goods, because he flings them overboard, he is sorry because driven to such a strait: and when he comes ashore wishes as much for his goods as ever.

4. That is not right trouble of Conscience, *which Sinners being impatient under, do fly for Comfort to the Creatures.* If thou art indeed wounded, the same hand that gave the wound must bind it up, *I wound, and I heal*, says God. *Deut.* 32. 39. If sensual delights, if Sports and Pastimes, if carnal Company, if immersing thy self in worldly business can divert, and by

by degrees chase away thy trouble, 'tis a sign 'twas never true. Right sorrow is not assuaged but by Spiritual means. 'Twas a wise course and resolution of those, Hos. 6. 1. *Come let us return unto the Lord for he hath torn, and he will heal us: he hath smitten and he will bind us up.*

5. That is not right trouble of Conscience, *where there is an utter despair of Mercy. Cain* was troubled, and so was *Judas*, and the trouble of both (especially of the latter) was unconceivably great, but despair spoyl'd it. I grant indeed that souls truly penitent may have Temptations, and very strong ones to despair, but there is an unseen hand in their greatest Terrors and Dejections, which keeps them from being swallowed up in that gulph quite, though sometimes they are upon the brink of it. *Cranmer* in his last Prayer cryes out, *I have sinned more than Tongue is able to express, but shall I despair? God forbid. Thou art a Gracious Lord, and thy Mercy does thrust away none who ask for a Remedy of sin, and comfort in their misery.* Despair does thwart the design of the Gospel which is to extoll the *Riches of Divine Grace, as superabounding, where sin has most abounded*; and to set forth Christ *as a Saviour to the uttermost.*

When the Spirit does give a sight of sin, he opens a door of hope, and lets in a beam of Light, whereby

(c) *In Cœlum terramque plusquam fando exprimi possit, offendi. Desperabo igitur? Absit. Tu clemens naturâ Deus cujus neminem oderat misericordia, qui abs te peccati remedium, ac solatium miseria & ærumnarum petit.*
Mel. Adamus, *in vitâ* Cranmeri.

the

the possibility of Mercy is discovered. The trembling Gaoler, did not say, *I am sure I shall be damned*, but *what shall I do that I may be saved?* Act. 16. 30. this very inquiry shews that some possibility of Salvation was conceived. Satan indeed endeavours to shut the door of hope, and to overwhelm the Soul, but he is not to be harkned to. Satan put it into the Heart of *Judas* to betray Christ, and afterwards he put it into his Heart to despair, and how effectual was his despair to his destruction. By no means therefore entertain despairing thoughts, for they come from Hell and lead thither.

6. That is not right trouble of Conscience *which is onely the effect of prevailing Melancholy.* This humour prevails exceedingly at this day, and those who never had experience of it cannot imagine the torment that is in it. *Burton* speaks feelingly, *No torture of Body like unto it; strappadoes, hot Irons, Phalaris Bulls are not comparable. All Fears, Griefs, Suspitions, Discontents, as so many small brooks are swallowed up and drown'd in this* Euripus, *this Irish Sea, this Ocean of misery. This is the Quintessence of humane Adversity: all other Diseases whatsoever are but flea-bitings to Melancholy in extent, 'tis the pith of them all. A Melancholy man is that true* Prometheus, *which is bound to* Caucasus, *the true* Tityus, *whose Bowells are still devoured by a Vulture, for he is fed upon by Anxieties and Griping cares continually.* But though Melancholy be so tormenting, it very much differs from trouble of Conscience, and is not so intolerable. You will ask me how Melancholy and Spiritual trouble differ? before I tell you how, I would lay down two things.

1. The

1. 'Tis an Argument of an *Ignorant and Profane Spirit, to say, that all trouble of Conscience is nothing else but Melancholy.* Such who are of this mind, do make a mock of sin, and of the Convictions of the Spirit, and of the terrors of the Lord, and slight the great Physitian of Souls: for if all trouble be from Humours in the Body, other Physitians may serve the turn.

2. Melancholy and trouble of Conscience are *sometimes joyned together*; and they may be mutually the Occasion of each others increase. If the Conscience be wounded, and the Body Distempered with this black Humour at the same time, Satan has the greater Advantage. The soul will not easily admit of Comfort, but is more inclined to meditate terror; and the wounds of Conscience will be the more smarting, and longer before Cured.

I shall now shew the difference between trouble of Conscience and Melancholy, in these particulars:

1. In Melancholy the *Body may plainly be perceived to be out of Order*; either no sleep at all, or a perpetual drousiness, the Spleen swelled or pained, a sourness in the stomach, and a Cloud seems to dwell in the Brain. But trouble of Conscience may be, and is found in those who are of the most excellent Constitution, and even in the time of the firmest Health. The Goalor, 'tis very likely, had a strong Body, and no Distemper that we read of upon him; yet his Conscience is wounded, and how sollicitous is he to escape Hell!

2. In Melancholy *there is great Confusion*; no rational account can be given of trouble. The Soul is like

like one in the dark, or that is blind-fold, and is exceedingly buffeted, but knows neither the Hand nor the Instrument from whence his smart comes. But a troubled Conscience can easily assign a cause of its trouble. Ask the Apostle *Paul* the reason of his trouble, he will Answer, *I was a Blasphemer, and a Persecuter, and Injurious*. Demand of the *Corinthians*, what Afflicted them? They will Answer, they had been *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Effeminate, Abusers of themselves with Mankind*, &c. 1 Cor. 6.9. Troubled souls do understand their Guilt and Plagues.

3. In Melancholy *the great thing desired is ease and quiet*, that the horrible darkness may be dispelled, and the former serenity may return. But in right trouble of Conscience, not onely Peace, but Peace upon a good ground is longed for; the present trouble is preferred before security in wickedness, that was formerly. Ay, and Grace as well as Peace is begged. Troubled *David* does not onely cry out, *Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation*, and *make me to hear Joy and Gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may Rejoyce*; but also, *Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me*, Ps. 51.8, 10, 12.

4. In Melancholy, *Trouble does often come by Fits*, when Fumes ascend unto the Head (which by the heat of them may sometimes be perceived) and do disorder the Fancy and Imagination: (*f*) then there

(f) *Melancholia est imaginationis depravatio à phantasmate melancholico exorta quo detentus, uni cogitationi absque furore & febre cum tristitiâ & metu inhæret. Ejus origo dependet à certi quidam Spirituum animalium dispositione ex humoris melancholici permissione producta, ad quam sequitur phantasma tenebricosum dictum, quod intellectus postea objecta obversans, hoc delirium & animi angorem excitat.*

is some stinging and perplexing thought which renders Life and all the enjoyments of it bitter and uncomfortable. But trouble of Conscience is more without intermission; it does not depend upon the ebbing or flowing of any Humour in the Body. Load is laid on by the Spirit of God, and the burthen presses continually untill the Comforter take it off. The *Psalmist* says, that *his sore ran in the Night, and ceased not*, Psal. 77. 2. So Psal. 38. 6. *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.*

5. Melancholy makes a *Man to fear every thing almost, though there be no just ground of fear.* When he goes to Bed he fears he shall die in his sleep, and not Live till Morning: Though in never so good a Trade, he fears that God will blast him in his Estate, and that he shall fall into extream poverty. Melancholy persons are tortured with a fear of being Distracted, and running stark Mad many times; and then they think what a sad spectacle they shall be when they are in *Bedlam*; and if Professors, how much Religion will be Reproached upon their Account. Many times they fear the appearing of the Devil in some terrible shape, and that thereby they shall be frighted out of their wits. 'Tis ordinary for them to have sad fore-boding thoughts of ill to themselves; as that some grievous Calamity is not far off from them, or theirs, and that their lives will be very short, and within a little while they shall be in another World. They can hardly hear of any that have Hang'd or Drown'd themselves, but they fear (g) they shall do the like one time or other. I

(g) *Quos malè habet hic morbus, tristes sunt & solitarii, formidulosi, & pertinaces, phantasias quasdam sibi faciunt quæ nec sunt, nec esse possunt, falsa multa imaginantur, timent non metuenda, sine causa mœrent animumque macerant.*

might spend a whole day in naming the fears of these sorrowful souls. And *if Fear have Torment*, as the Apostle speaks, 1 *John* 4.18. How tormenting is Melancholy that is so full of Fear!

But a troubled Conscience *eyes and fears the Wrath of an Almighty God*, and that principally, *Psal.* 88.7. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves, Selah.* And v. 16, 17. *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off, they came round about me daily like water, they compassed me about together.* 'Tis not Poverty, Disgrace, Death that is so much dreaded, but a Jealous, and highly provoked God is terrible: and therefore when the Lord promises to revive such Consciences, he says, he will cease to be Angry, and to contend, *Isa.* 57.16. *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath, lest the Spirit fail before me and the Souls which I have made.*

6. In Melancholy *there are strange hurryings in the Heart*; 'tis snatched and carried away, and some *amazing thoughts are upon a sudden injected about Spiritual things*; but there is no *Scripture-ground* alledged for them. Some under this Distemper will cry out, they are meer Hypocrites; and as if they had look'd into the black Book of Gods Reprobation, will peremptorily say, their Names have been written there from everlasting. Others will cry out, that the day of Grace is past and gone, and that God has sworn concerning them in his wrath, that they shall never enter into his Rest. Now, as the God of Heaven does walk upon the Wings of the Wind, so Satan, the God of this World, does walk upon these Melancholick winds, mixes himself with them, and terrifies the Soul with the fear of Damnation. And oh with

what

what astonishment does a poor Melancholick Creature think of being damned everlastingly! Many times Satan tells them, that the longer they Live, they will but fill the Vial fuller of wrath, and but add more fewel to that Fire, which must be their Portion for ever, and hereupon follow temptations to self-murther; and upon all convenient Occasions, when they are alone, by Water, or see a Rope, or a Knife, *Do it, Do it*, is violently urged in upon them. But if you ask these Melancholy souls, why they conclude themselves Hypocrites and Reprobates; not one Scripture can they produce to prove it.

VVhereas on the other side, in trouble of Conscience the Conviction is plainly grounded on the word of God. The awakened VVorldling hears his *Covetousness called Idolatry*; the awakened VVhore-monger perceives evidently that *no unclean Person shall inherit the Kingdom of God*. The awakened Swearer reads that his Oaths will *make him fall into condemnation*: They believe those threats, and know that they are guilty, therefore they are Afflicted, and look out after a Remedy, and cry to be turned from their Iniquities, and Reconciled unto God.

7. In Melancholy, *Druggs are profitable*; gentle Remedies (for violent are by no means to be used) (*b*) may be blessed to give ease. But as for trouble of Conscience, *Hei mihi quod nullis dolor est Medicabilis Herbis*; Alas, no Herbs can here at all avail. The whole Colledge of Physitians would be here at a loss. VVhen the *Italian* Doctors came to Visit *Spira* in his distress, He spake these words: *Alas, poor Men, how*

(*b*) Πᾶν τὸ πολὺ τῆ φύσι πολέμιον. Hippocrates. *Aphor.*

far wide are you? Do you think that this Disease is to be Cured by Potions? Believe me, there must be another manner of Medicine: It is neither Plaisters nor Drugs that can help a fainting Soul, cast down with the sense of sin, and the wrath of God. 'Tis onely Christ that must be the Physitian, and the Gospel the Soul-Antidote. But here I must add, that where the trouble is mixt, partly from Melancholy and partly from a wounded Conscience, proper Physick, (and especially a well-ordered Diet and Exercise) must be used for the one, as the blood of Christ is the alone sutable Remedy for the other.

8. Melancholy alone *never alienates the Heart from sin.* Several that Labour under this distemper, in their lucid intervals will be as vain as any; nay, sometimes they have strange and strong inclinations to Uncleanness, and too much yield unto them; they will most Prodigally mispend their time, which is much more precious than Gold that perishes, and exceedingly give way to sensuality, and the pretence is their Melancholy. When in their doleful fits they have been afraid of Hell, and have concluded they should be damned as certainly as either *Cain* or *Judas*; yet when that fit of Melancholy is over, how will they yield unto Temptation! they are as proud as before, as passionate and worldly as ever, and none of this troubles them. This Malady also does mightily indispose them to Duty, it makes the Heart like a stock or stone: Indeed this blockishness, where there is Grace, is a burthen; but in others not so. Duty onely is a Burthen, not their indisposition to it.

But now trouble of Conscience, if right, helps much to break that League between the Soul and Corruptions; it causes great tenderness and fear of sin, and

and very much incites to Prayer and other Holy Duties which God has Commanded, and wherein Communion with him is to be enjoyed. 'Twas said of Persecuting *Saul*, as soon as the Lord had struck him to the ground, and he was prickt in his heart *Behold he Prayeth*, Acts 9.11. *When the Waters*, that is, troubles, *came into* David's *Soul, when he was sinking in the deep Mire, where there was no standing*, how earnestly does he cry out, *Save me, O God!* Nay, he *did cry till his Throat was dryed*, and *though his eyes failed, yet he waited for the Lord*, Psal. 69. 1, 2, 3.

Having thus spoken of the mistakes about trouble of Conscience;

I am in the Second place to discover, when Conscience is troubled after a right manner, so as that it may be proper to apply Comfort from the Gospel. This right trouble I shall set forth in these particulars:

1. *Some special sin, perhaps, more heinous than Ordinary, is usually at first Discovered, and charged home by the Spirit upon the Conscience.* The Apostle *Paul*, before his Conversion, was Riding to *Damascus*, but the Lord met him in the way, and the first sin he was charged with, was that of Persecuting the Church of Christ, *Acts* 9. 3, 4. *As he journied, and came near* Damascus, *suddenly there shined round about him a Light from Heaven, and he fell to the Earth, and heard a Voice, saying unto him*, Saul, Saul, *why Persecutest thou me?* Those Jews that were awakened by *Peter*'s Sermon, were charged *with taking Christ, and Crucifying, and slaying him with wicked hands*, Acts 2. 23. Thus the Woman of *Samaria*, who had had five Husbands, is told of her Living in Whore-

dome with *a man that was not her Husband, John* 4. 18. Thus commonly the work begins; ſome more groſſe ſin, as lying, ſwearing, drunkenneſs, ſelf-pollution, or the like is diſcovered, and that is like a dart ſhot in the Conſcience; cauſing a great deal of trouble and cannot eaſily be ſhaken off. (*i*)

2. After one ſin is diſcovered and Conſcience begins to be perplexed, *innumerable other tranſgreſſions are brought to remembrance.* Juſt as when a debtor is arreſted by one Creditor, all the others are ready to come upon him. The Eye of Conſcience being truly opened to ſee one ſin, preſently is able to diſcern thouſands. *David* after his being awakened by the Prophet *Nathan*, looks firſt upon his filthineſs and blood guiltineſs, but a great many other ſins alſo ſtared him in the Face. Therefore as a man beſet by all together, he cryes out for the pardon of all, Pſal. 51. 9. *Hide thy face from my ſins, blot out all my Tranſgreſſions*, Oh how did his iniquities ſwarm about him and ſting him, when he ſaid, Pſal. 40. 12. *Innumerable evils have compaſſed me about, my iniquities have taken hold upon me that I am not able to look up, they are more than the hairs of my Head therefore my Heart faileth me.*

3. Where right trouble of Conſcience is, the *impure ſtreams are traced up to the fountain*, and the Corruption of Nature is acknowledged and bewailed. Contrite *David* lookt thus farr, Pſal. 51. 5. *Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my Mother conceive me.* And the Apoſtle *Paul* took notice of that evil which was preſent with him, which was ſo great an impediment

(*i*) *Hæret lateri letalis arundo.* Virgil. Ænead. 4.

unto

unto his doing of good, Rom. 7. How can we be rightly humbled till this Corruption of Nature be seen? but when we perceive that Satan is not principally to be blamed for our wickednesses, but our own selves, and that what does defile us does not come from *below*, but from *within*, this will make us to be filled with the greater self abhorrency. *Every man is Tempted*, says the Apostle *James*, *when he is drawn away of his own Lust and inticed*, chap. 1. 14. *Evil Thoughts*, *Adulteries*, *Murthers* and such like Abominations, Christ tells us, proceed out of our *own Hearts*, Math. 15. 19. Oh this does exceedingly afflict the Soul which is rightly troubled; that all those thousands of sins which have been committed, are but the offspring of a corrupted Heart and Nature, and not one is to be laid at any other door.

4. The Conscience when rightly troubled *is convinced of that sin of Unbelief, and the great Evil that is in it.* 'Tis the work of the Spirit to convince the World of Sin and Unbelief is especially discovered, John 16. 8, 9. *When the Comforter is come he will reprove the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment; of Sin because they Believe not on Me.* Not believing in Christ is a great sin in it self, and it binds all the sinners other iniquities fast upon him, (k) for there is no other way to receive Remission of sins, but by Believing in the Lord Jesus. *Him only hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, Rom. 3. 25. 'Tis a

(k) *Hoc peccatum (non crediderunt in me) quasi solum sit præ cæteris posuit, quia hoc manente cætera detinentur, & hoc discedente cætera remittuntur.* Augustin. *Tract.* 95. *in Joan.* pag. mihi 474. Tom. 9.

damning thing to transgresse the Law; but to be deaf to the Gospel, and to reject Christ is a great deal worse, for this is to sin against a Remedy, and to slight an offer of Life and Peace. How Glorious is God in his dear Son! how does his Wisdome, and Power, and Grace, and Love, and Righteousness, and Truth shine forth in him! now notwithstanding all this to be offended at Christ, not to Reverence the Son, not to receive him though he offers benefits of inestimable value, this must needs encrease guilt, and heighten wrath exceedingly. If a Prince should, after his subjects had played the Rebels, and he had them at his Mercy; offer a pardon to them, and they should refuse it and chuse rather to continue rebels still; their not accepting the Princes Clemency, would incense him more to their destruction, than their forgoing Rebellion. We are ready to pity *Tantalus*, (l) who as *Homer* sayes was thus punished; he stood in a lake with Water up to his chin, but when ever he stoopt to quench his thirst with the water, it presently sunk away from him. Brave Fruit also is said to grow just over his Head, but when he stretched out his hand to take it, the Wind did carry it away from him. But now let us suppose that the water might have been drunk, and *Tantalus* would not have stoopt a little for it, and that Fruit might have been eaten, but though it grew within his reach, he would not have been at the pains to have stretched forth his hand to pluckt it: Who would have pitied

(l) Στεῦτο δὲ διψάων πίεειν δ' οὐκ εἶχεν ἑλέσθαι
Ὀσσάκι γὰρ κύψει ὁ γέρων πιέειν μενεαίνων,
Τοσσάκι ὕδωρ ἀπολέσκετ' ἀνάβροχον —
Δένδρεα ὑψιπέτηλα κατακρῆθεν χέε καρπὸν, &c.
Τῶν ὁπότ' ἰθύσει ὁ γέρων ἐπὶ χερσὶ μασάσθαι,
Τὰς δὲ ἄνεμος ῥίπτασκε ποτὶ νέφεα σκιόεντα.
Homer. Odys. 11. pag. *mihi* 321.

Tanta-

Tantalus then? every one would have blamed his folly in not taking what was brought so neer to him. This is the case of the Unbeliever, *the Word is nigh him*, Rom. 10. 8. Christ is nigh him, the Bread and Water of life is brought to his very mouth, but he will taste of neither, though he so much needs both, and may have both freely.

The Conscience therefore is troubled for unbelief, for the sinners rejecting Christ in times past, that when such great Salvation was offered, it should be neglected; and that the Lord Jesus should stand so long and knock so often at the door, but it was kept shut and barr'd against him. Oh 'twere just sayes the sinner, for Christ to go away, and never to give so much as one knock at my Heart again, and, now I see my Need of his Salvation, utterly to deny that Salvation to me.

5. When the Conscience is rightly troubled. *The Anger of the Lord, and the Curse of his Law are a very great burthen.* Sin has been committed, Commands Holy, Just and Good have been transgressed, and Christ who alone can appease Divine Anger, satisfie for transgression, and Mediate a Peace, has been contemned; well therefore may the Sinner be afraid. How great and how fierce is this wrath of the Almighty! there is never a single sin but makes the sinner liable to the Curse of the Law, and how Cursed a wretch, do iniquities ten thousand times ten thousand, many times told, render him? every transgression makes the Lord Angry, to how great an height then is that anger by Millions of transgressions raised! The awakened sinner sees the Lord whetting his glittering Sword, and his hand taking hold of vengeance, hereupon fear does come upon him, and pain as of a Woman

man in travel. How scalding are the Drops of the Lords wrath, what then are the full showers? If God run upon any like a Gyant they must needs be broken with breach upon breach.

I dare not say that the anger of the Lord does lye alike heavy upon all awakened Consciences and truly humbled Souls, nor that these terrors of Soul are equal in all that are brought home to Christ. Though all humbled sinners are made with *Ephraim* to bemoan themselves, yet some are made to bemoan themselves much longer, and much louder than others. *Levi* taken from the Receipt of Custom, and *Lydia*, felt not that we read of, such Agonies and Terrors of Conscience as Persecuting *Saul*, and the trembling Gaoler. All the vessels of Mercy are not of the same temper, and that which *cannot abide the Fire*, 'tis sufficient that, as under the Old Law, *it passe through the Water*, Numb. 31, 23. As to these Legal terrors I would say these five things.

1. These *terrors in themselves are a punishment*, and therefore not to be desired in so great a degree, we are not to be fond of them, though when they are upon us, we must desire support under them, and that they may ptosper unto the end whereunto they are appointed, namely, to wean us from our lusts, and drive us out of our selves, unto the Lord Jesus.

2. These *Terrors being a Punishment, surely are not saving Grace.* Reprobates have had them in a great measure. O *Judas*! thou hadst an Hell upon Earth by Reason of legal Horror, before thou wentest to thy appointed place: and 'tis possible to exceed in regard of these. Therefore the Apostle takes care in reference to the incestuous *Corinthian*, *that he should not be swallowed*

swallowed up with over much sorrow, 2 Cor. 2. 7.

3. Barely from these Terrors of the Law, *none can conclude that they shall certainly be joined to the Lord Jesus.* They are not alwayes fore-runners of Faith, but sometimes they issue in despair, and sometimes they wear off, and sinners become more hardened and confirmed in their wickedness. Thus it was with *Pharaoh* notwithstanding all his trouble and fear at some times of the Lords anger.

4. Those that complain *for want of these legal Terrors are really under them* in a more remisse degree, for those who are perplexed with doubts and fears about their Eternal state, and think because they never were sufficiently troubled, that they never yet closed with Christ, what are these afraid of but Gods anger, and his Curse which by sin has been deserved?

5. Do not go about *to direct or Counsell the Spirit of the Lord.* If he bring thee home by a more gentle way, & give thee a sight of thy Remedy as soon almost as of thy sin & misery, thou hast the more cause to be thankful, but withal to be the more vigilant and watchful; for if wrath has not lain so hard upon thee, thou wilt be the more subject to make bold with sin afterward, and art not likely to be so fearful to incurre Divine displeasure for the future.

6. Where the Conscience is rightly troubled, *the sinner is filled with grief and shame because of its iniquities.* God complains of the Children of *Israel*, that they were *Impudent and hard hearted. Ezek.* 3. 7. But the troubled Soul is confounded before God, the humbled sinner thinks thus, that if the World did know all

all the ſins which he has been guilty of, he ſhould be ready to wiſh himſelf out of the World, but Gods knowledge ſignifies more than if All Creatures were acquainted with his abominations. I do not wonder at that expreſſion, Jer. 3. ult. *We lye down in our own ſhame, and our confuſion covereth us.* How foul does ſin make us! how unlike to God! how monſtrouſly to reſemble the unclean Spirit! what high and horrible ingratitude is there in ſin! is this the requital for all the Lords goodneſs? is this the return for millions of mercies? ſhame upon this grows great, and ſorrow goes hand in hand with it. We read *that a voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and ſupplication of the Children of* Iſrael, *for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God,* Jer. 3. 21. *Behold O Lord,* ſayes the Church, *for I am in diſtreſſe, my bowels are troubled, my heart is turned within me*; why what ails her? *I have grievouſly rebelled,* this made *her ſighes many, and her Heart faint,* Lam. 2. 20, 22. Sin does beſt deſerve ſorrow becauſe 'tis ſo great an evil, and there is ſuch encouragement in Scripture here to ſpend our grief. And the troubled Soul gives ſin the greateſt ſhare; and is ſorry after all, that 'tis ſo little ſorry. Heark to one of our Engliſh Poets. (†)

O who will give me tears? Come all you ſprings,
Dwell in my head and eyes; come Clouds and rain:
My grief hath need of all the watry things,
That Nature hath produc'd. Let every vein

(†) Herbert pag. 158. *Grief.*

Sark

Suck up a River to supply mine eyes,
My weary weeping eyes too dry for me,
Unless they get new conduits, new supplies
To bear them out, and with my state agree.
What are two shallow fords, two little spouts
Of a less World? The greater is but small,
A narrow Cupboard for my griefs and doubts,
Which want provision in the midst of all.
Verses, ye are too fine a thing, too wise
For my rough sorrows: cease, be dumb and mute,
Give up your feet and run into mine eyes,
And keep your measures for some Lovers lute,
Whose grief allows him Musick and a rhyme:
For mine excludes both measure, tune, and time:
Alas, my God!

7. Where Conscience is rightly troubled, *the sinner accuses and condemns himself.* He holds up his Hand at Gods Bar, and crys *Guilty* of his own accord; Satan may hold his Tongue, for one that's troubled in Spirit is forward enough to be his own Accuser. We say commonly in Humane Courts of Judicature, *Nemo tenetur accusare seipsum.* No Man is bound to accuse himself. But 'tis otherwise in the Court of Conscience: Here 'tis a known Rule, Accuse thy self, and confess thy Crime, that thou mayst be pardoned, 1 *John* 1. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* How large have broken hearts been in acknowledging their Offences, and the aggravations of them; they have not spared to speak, and to tell all they knew against themselves; they have called themselves Rebellious, Revolters, VVicked, Foolish

ish, Ignorant Beasts before God; all this has shewn how they have disliked and abhorred themselves.

And as they have accused, so they have been forward to pass a Judgment, and to condemn themselves. When the Jews Crucified Christ, they accused him, cryed out against him, as a Deceiver, and condemned him to that Ignominious Death. Troubled souls deal thus with the Flesh, and its Lusts and Affections: They accuse the Flesh, as being enmity against God; they cry out, that they have been deceived by the Flesh, and they condemn the Lusts of it to be Crucified and slain; and further say, because the Flesh has been pleased and served, they themselves deserve to be everlastingly condemned. In the greatest severities they cry out, *the Lord is Righteous*; nay, if he should inflict the Vengeance of eternal flames upon them, they grant his ways would be but very equal.

8. Where Conscience is rightly troubled, *the sinner despairs in himself.* 'Tis a great sin to despair of Mercy and Salvation; but to despair of saving ourselves by any strength or worth of our own, this is but needful. The awakened Conscience sees that our own wisdom is insufficient to guide us in the way Everlasting; that our own Righteousness has innumerable defects in it, and dares not lean upon it. When *Daniel* had done his very best, he dares not trust in it, *Chap.* 9. 18. *We do not present our Supplications before thee for our Righteousnesses, but for thy great Mercies*; as if he should say, our Righteousnesses are imperfect and small, they are not the ground of our hope; but our expectation is from thy great Mercies. 'Tis a true saying

ſaying of *Luther*, (*m*) That Conſcience can never be ſatisfied with our own VVorks and Righteouſneſs, for it ſtill deſires and wants more, and finds a great deal amiſs in what has been done already. If we were to be Juſtified by our own VVorks, an enlightned and troubled Conſcience would be like the Horſe-leaches Daughter, and ſtill cry, *Give, Give*, and could never be ſatisfied.

The ſinner that is truly troubled, deſpairs alſo in his own Srength as well as VViſdom and Righteouſneſs: He ſees that he has no Power to believe, & that he cannot come to the Lord Jeſus, unleſs drawn to him by the Father. He cannot beget himſelf, in a Spiritual ſence, no more than he was able to do it in a Natural. *Fletcher* does well ſet forth this in theſe Verſes. (†)

Who is it ſees not that he nothing is
But he that nothing ſees? What weaker breaſt
Since Adam's *Armour fail'd, dares warrant his;*
That made by God of all the Creatures beſt,
Strait made himſelf the worſt of all the reſt.
If any Strength we have, it is to ill;
But all the good is Gods, both Power and Will,
The dead man cannot riſe, though he himſelf may kill.

9. VVhere Conſcience is rightly troubled, *this trouble does begin to eſtrange and wean the heart from ſin.*

(*m*) *Numquam tantum operum poteſt invenire, ut conſcientiam reddat pacatam, ſed ſemper deſiderat plura; imo in illis ipſis quæ fecit, peccata invenit.* Luther. *in Epiſt. ad Gal.* c. 4.

(†) *Chriſts victory*, pag. 50.

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The sinner sees evidently that he has been grossely mistaken in his Lusts, and wofully deceived by them. They promised him pleasure, but have paid him in Gall and VVormwood; they promised him profit, but have undone him; he has none of the true and enduring Riches, and his Soul is in great danger of being lost for ever; hereupon he is not so fond of them as before: His Love abates, and begins to be turned into aversation and Hatred. *He says, I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it has not profited me,* Job 33.27. nay, insteed of profiting, it has been exceedingly Mischievous; and now sin begins to be look upon with an ill eye. VVhen *Ephraim* perceived that his Idols could not help him, nay, provoked the Lord unto Jealousie and Anger against him, he flings them away to the Bats and to the Moles, as things unworthy to be VVorshipt, or so much as look on; and says, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* Hos. 14.8. Then trouble does work kindly when sin it self is disliked, and the soul with an indignation and detestation crys out, what have I to do any more with so great an evil?

10. When Conscience is rightly troubled, *the sinner is very inquisitive to understand what he must do to be saved.* Thus the Gaoler, *Acts* 16.29,30. *came trembling, and fell down before* Paul *and* Silas, *and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* So *Acts* 2.37. *Now, when they heard this, they were prickt in their heart, and said unto* Peter *and the rest of the Apostles, Men and* Brethren, *what shall we do?* And *Saul*, as soon as throughly awakened, is at the same enquiry, *Acts* 9.6. *And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* The Question is no longer, Who will shew

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us any of the Worlds good? The Question is no longer, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be cloathed? But the main enquiry is, What course must be taken to have sin covered? Gods anger removed, the immortal and precious Soul saved? That is, delivered from everlasting burnings, and brought to an incorruptible Inheritance. These are the chief Matters which all should mind; and truly they who think it not worth the while to enquire about Salvation, 'tis a sign they have not set so much as one step in the way to it, but all their days their feet have been going down to Death and Hell.

11. VVhere Conscience is rightly troubled, *the sinners heart will consent to any Conditions and terms of Peace and Reconciliation with God.* There is a Beam of Spiritual Light which shines into his Soul, so that he sees all things after another manner to what he did formerly. He sees God to be another kind of Foe and Friend than heretofore he thought him, and Christ to be a better Lord and Master than heretofore he did imagine. He comes to God, and says, *Lord, be Merciful, be my Father, and let the Lord Jesus become a Saviour to me; and write down what Articles thou pleasest, I will subscribe them, onely help me to do it with my very Heart.* VVhen he hears that Command, *Cast away every Transgression*, he presently crys out, *Lord, let not any Iniquity have the dominion over me.* VVhen he hears that all the Precepts of the Lord are to be kept diligently, he crys out, *Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes.* VVhen he hears of the Necessity of Conversion, he crys out, *Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned.* VVhen he hears what 'twill cost to be Christ's Disciple, and how he must deny himself, and take up his Cross, he

cryes out, Oh, let me never be Offended, but count all things loſs, that I may win Chriſt. The Chimes do not more preſently follow the Clock, than the truly humbled Soul does upon its underſtanding the will of God, deſire to ſubmit unto it. 'Tis willing to do any thing, to be any thing, to bear any thing, to forbear any thing, ſo the favour of God, and an Intereſt in the Lord Jeſus may be Obtained. Thus you ſee when Conſcience is troubled after a right manner.

In the next place, I am to direct, *How troubled and afflicted Conſciences are to be Comforted.* And before I begin, I have need to cry out, *The Lord give me the Tongue of the Learned, that I may know how to ſpeak a word in Seaſon to him that is weary!* Iſa. 50. 4. O you Afflicted Souls, that are toſſed in a Tempeſt! your Affliction is of all the deepeſt, the Tempeſt that you are in does beat moſt hard upon you. You have not to deal with an Arm of Fleſh, nor onely with the Powers of Darkneſs, but the Lord himſelf has bruiſed you. Now, for your Relief, I am to bring forth the ſweeteſt Comforts of the Goſpel; I am to Preach unto you the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt: I am to tell you of Love that has Height, and Length, and Depth, and Breadth, and paſſes Knowledge. I am to diſplay the Mercy of God, which is great towards humbled ſinners, as the Heaven is high above the Earth. But more particularly, I would lay theſe following things before you.

1. *This trouble of Conſcience that you are under, is really the work of the Spirit, the Comforter.* Even under Conviction, and while in diſtreſs of Soul, you are really in a Comforters hand. There is a great deal of

of difference between the wounds of an Enemy and the lancings of a Chirurgeon; the latter are the better born, becauſe in order unto a perfect Cure, and Eaſe, and Health. Three things are here to be Obſerved.

1. Theſe *Convictions of the Spirit are a great mercy.* The Children of Men would all of them lye ſtill, and at laſt die in their wickedneſs, if the Spirit did not awaken ſome of them. 'Tis a kindneſs to be told of our danger while 'tis poſſible to get out of it. You groan and complain becauſe of your Guilt; you fear the wrath of God, and deſire his loving kindneſs. I may ſay truly, you are highly favoured, for how many round about you fearleſly provoke the dreadful God to his Face, and turn to their wicked courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the Battel. Now ſin is a burthen, your condition is much better than when you made light of it, and ſaw no harm like to follow upon it. 'Tis good for us to ſee the avenger of blood purſuing us, as long as the City of Refuge is open to receive and ſhelter us from that avenger.

2. Theſe convictions *are in order unto Conſolation.* Comfort is that which is proper and ſuitable to the Mourners; and reſt unto the weary and heavy laden. To go by Hell gates to Heaven is not to go at all out of the way. The Lord does bring Souls within the Suburbs of Hell ſometimes, that they may be the more afraid of ſin all their dayes, that they may value peace of Conſcience at an higher rate, and adore the Grace of God in catching them as fire-brands out of the burning; *Jonah cryed unto the Lord out of the Belly of Hell, and when his Soul fainted within him,* Chap. 2.3,7. And ſurely his being heard and helped

did the more affect him. Oh, do not think much to Sow in Tears, as long as the promise is, you shall Reap in Joy, *Psal.* 126. 5.

3. It may marvellously support you under your trouble, *that you do Judge and Condemn your selves.* The Apostle expresly says, that such *shall not be Judged*, that is, condemned with the World, 1 *Cor.* 11. 31. They that accuse themselves, invalidate Satans accusations against them; and they that condemn themselves go the way to prevent Gods condemning them. He will not throw into Hell those who are continually sentencing themselves thither, and see no possibility of Help but in Rich and Free Grace; and who, as they Judge themselves for past sins, are desirous also for the future to be kept from Offending.

2. For the Relief of a troubled Conscience, take Notice of *the love of God towards the World, in sending Christ into it. God so loved the World, that he gave his onely Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish*, John 3. 16. See also 1 *John* 4. 10. *Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins.* This Love of God towards the World is Matter of great Encouragement, if it be rightly improved: It shews how great a kindness God has for Mankind; He has contrived a way for their Redemption and Salvation, he has provided a Mediator for them, which he did not do for the Angels that fell from him, *Heb.* 2. 16. *He took not on him the Nature of Angels*, or he took not hold on the Angels, οὐ δήπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται, but he took on him the Seed of *Abraham*. Whatever Christ did for Mans Salvation, 'twas the will of God he should do it. The whole work of Redemption is called

led a doing of the will of God, *Heb.* 10. 7. Sacrifices and Offerings being insufficient to take away sin: *Then said I, lo, I come; in the Volume of thy Book it is written of me to do thy Will, O God.* Nay, the Father is said to Love Christ upon this Account; partly, because he laid down his Life to save Men from Eternal Death, *John* 10. 17. *Because I lay down my Life, therefore doth my Father Love me.* Now, you know Christ's Life was given, that it might be a Ransom for many.

All this shews the good will of God towards Man, and how ready he is that Man should be brought near unto him, and enjoy him, and be eternally happy in that enjoyment. This *Amor Benevolentiæ*, this Love of good will in God, and desire after Man's welfare, was taken notice of by the Angels, and they are brought in Admiring and Magnifying the Lord, when Christ a Saviour was Born into the World, *Luke* 2. 13, 14. *Suddenly there was a Multitude of the Heavenly Host Praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on Earth Peace, Good will towards Men.* Let all this encourage drooping Spirits, and banish those thoughts of God which Satan is apt to inject, and which are utterly unworthy of his Love and kindness towards Man.

3. Study that *great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh.* Eye the Incarnation of the Son of God, *John* 1. 14. *The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth.* God is the Fountain of Grace, but being made Man, Man has access into that Fountain: and the Son of God shews himself to be truly the Redeem-

er and (n) *Messiah*, because he is abundantly, nay, infinitely able to furnish with all Grace, whosoever come to him. 'Twas (o) *Cranmer*'s Comfort in his last Prayer, that *this great Mystery, God manifest in the Flesh, was not onely for a few, or light Offences.* The greatest of Transgressors may from hence be Encouraged, both the God-head and Manhood of Christ are to be eyed, and truly it may be very reviving to contemplate both.

1. *The Godhead of Christ.* And if he be God, how safely may he be trusted in? The Apostle tells us, *that by Him were all things Created that are in Heaven and in Earth; Visible and Invisible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities or Powers, all things were made by him, and for him,* Col. 1. 16. He is said also, *to uphold all things by the Word of his Power,* Heb. 1. 3. surely then his hand is not shortned, that it cannot save. Christ is affirmed to be over all God Blessed for ever, *Rom.* 9. 5. Let not any imagine, that he is onely God by Office, for he is also styled *the true God and Eternal Life,* 1 John 5. 20. And if the Scripture say, that he is the true God, let not any Corrupt mind be so bold, as to assert that he is God improperly so called. Untill we look as high as

(n) *Christus Apostolis inde agnitus est pro Filio Dei, quod complementum omnium quæ ad spirituale Dei regnum pertinent, in se haberet, denique quod in omnibus vere se præstiterit Redemptorem & Messiam, quæ maxime insignis est nota quâ discerni ab aliis omnibus debuit.* Calv. *in Johan.* c. 1.

(o) *Magnum hoc mysterium, Verbum caro factum pro paucis aut levibus noxis editum orbi non fuit.* Mel. Adamus *in vitâ* Cranmeri.

the

the God-head of our Lord Jeſus, we cannot find where-on our Faith may reſt, nor wherewith our Conſciences may be ſatisfied.

In Scripture, *God and Blood, Jehovah and Righteouſneſs* are joyned together. *God* is ſaid to have *Purchaſed the Church with his own Blood*, Acts 20. 28. And *Jer.* 23. 6. This is the Name whereby Chriſt is called, *Jehovah*, or, *the Lord our Righteouſneſs*. As his blood could not have been ſhed, if he had not been Man, ſo the ſhedding of it would not have been ſufficient for the Redemption and Purchaſing of the Church if he had not been God. Becauſe he is God, therefore his Righteouſneſs being imputed unto ſinners is ſufficient for their Juſtification, though they have none of their own that is worth naming. The Apoſtle Magnifies the Goſpel, becauſe *therein* the Righteouſneſs of God *is Revealed from Faith to Faith*, Rom. 1. 17. 'Tis called the Righteouſneſs of God, not onely becauſe God the Father does accept of it as perfect and ſufficient, but becauſe 'tis the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, who is truly God as well as Man, and from whoſe Deity is derived ſuch a value and vertue unto his Sufferings and Obedience. Surely the more we view the God-head of our Lord Jeſus, the firmer will be our recumbence upon him, and the leſs ſhall we be afraid of the Enemies of our Salvation, ſince he can ſo eaſily ſubdue them.

יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ

2. *The Manhood of Chriſt*, as well as his Godhead muſt be eyed. How often in the Goſpel is he called the Son of man, *Luke* 19. 10. *The Son of Man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt. The Son of man muſt be lifted up that he might draw all men to him*, John 12. 32, 34. The Apoſtle tells us

there is but one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. By taking our Nature upon him he is become neer a kin to us, and is not ashamed to call us Brethren, Heb. 2. 11, 12. *Both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one.* Christ who sanctifieth, hath the same humane nature with Beleivers who are sanctified, *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them Brethren*, saying *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee.* With what boldness may the Children of men come to the Lord Jesus, *who was in all things made like them, that he might be a Merciful and Faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*, Heb. 2. 17. *Ruth* emboldned her self to speak unto *Boaz*, *Spread thy skirt over thine handmaid for thou art a neer kinsman*, Ruth. 3. 9. Our Lord Jesus is neer a kin to us, it belongs to him to redeem both us and our lost Inheritance; we may with confidence desire him to spread his skirt over us, and to betroth us unto himself for ever.

4. For the comforting of a troubled Conscience, *take notice of that compleat satisfaction that Christ has made unto Divine Justice, by offering up of himself upon the crosse for sin.* Behold the Lamb of God slain, and taking away the sin of the world. Three things are much to be studied by those that are wounded in their spirits. Christs suffering of Death his overcoming of Death; and his seconding his sufferings with his perpetual intercession.

1. *His suffering of Death.* The Apostle takes much notice of the person who died, he was altogether innocent; he died indeed for the unjust, but himself

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was just and righteous. The penitent Thief spake Truth upon the Crosse, when he rebuked his fellow, saying, *Dost not thou fear God seeing thou art in same condemnation, and we indeed justly, for we receive the reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amisse*, Luk. 23. 40, 41. Therefore he is likened unto a *Lamb without blemish and without spot*. He was made sin indeed, and a Curse for us; but he had no sin of his own, whereby the least Curse or Punishment could be deserved. Christ was innocent; and Oh! how high and great a Person was he? *He being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, yet humbled himself in the form of a Servant, and became obedient to Death, even the Death of Crosse.* Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. And since he that was the Mighty God did thus humble and abase himself, there is no sin so great but his humiliation may make satisfaction for it.

I do not wonder that the Apostle speaks so highly concerning *the knowledge of Christ Crucified*. Here is the ground of mans Comfort and Salvation. When I behold the Son of God who has the same Essence, Power, Glory, and Eternity with the Father, stooping so low as to become Man: when I behold him not only a Man, but a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief all his days; and read that at last he was wounded and bruised, and slain for sin, I may be satisfied that here is enough suffered to satisfie the justice of God to the full. Sin indeed did rise high because committed against God, and it has been heightned by many agrravations; but the Son of God, did stoop low when he became Man, and still was more and more abased till he came to the lowest degree of his humiliation; besides his sufferings were aggravated,

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for he *knew before hand all that was to come upon him*, John 18. 4. He knew all the bitter ingredients and dregs of wrath that were in that Cup which he was to drink off to the very bottom; and in the midst of his sufferings his Father hides his face which made them so much the greater. Oh who can conceive the weight that lay upon our Lord, when all the iniquities of his whole Church lay upon him at once, and being under all deserted, did roar out *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Now if it be inquired, what the end of Christ was in his suffering of Death? the answer must be, 'twas, that he might put away sin, his Blood was shed for the remission of sin, and to deliver us from that wrath which by sin was merited. Oh sweet Scripture, Rom. 5. 8. *But God commendeth his love towards us in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us, much more then being now justified by his Blood we shall be saved from wrath through him.* Our Lord was delivered for our offences; he was stricken for our iniquities, and 'tis evident that he did undergo to the full whatever was required, and paid the uttermost farthing of our debt, for he cryed out upon the crosse, Τετέλεσται, *It is finished*, and then gave up the Ghost, Joh. 19. 30.

2. The troubled Conscience should not only take notice of Christs suffering Death, but also *of his overcoming Death in his Resurrection.* The Apostle in his triumph of Faith, speaks of the Elect being secured from the charge of sin by the Death of Christ, but *rather* by his Resurrection, Rom. 8. 33, 34. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again.* If he had been still

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in the grave all our hopes would have been buried with him. *If Chriſt be not rais'd your Faith is vain, ye are yet in your ſins*, 1 Cor. 15. 17. He was for our debt arreſted as it were, and thrown into the grave, and being come out again we may conclude, that juſtice has no more to demand, and as our Surety he has no more to pay. *Chriſt being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him*, Rom. 6. 9. His Reſurrection ſhews that his dying *once* was ſufficient.

3. Chriſt *ſeconds his ſufferings with continual interceſſion.* (p) When he had by himſelf purged our ſins, he ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on High, and he ever lives to make interceſſion for us. 'Tis lookt upon as a great matter to have a friend in Court, that may ſpeak a good word for us to an earthly King, but how much more a priviledge is it to have ſuch a friend as the Lord Jeſus is, in the Court of Heaven, ready to back our Prayers with his own interceſſion, which is ever prevalent? but troubled Souls may fear that Chriſt prays not for them, ſince he ſays, *I pray for theſe, I pray not for the World, but for thoſe which thou haſt given me, for they are thine*, John 17. 9. To this I reply; that Chriſt prays for all that believe in him, *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for all them that ſhall believe on me through their word.* Now thoſe troubled

(p) *Porrò hanc interceſſionem carnali ſenſu ne metiamur; non enim cogitandus eſt ſupplex flexis genibus, manibus expanſis Patrem deprecari: ſed quia apparet ipſe aſſiduè cum morte & reſurrectione ſuâ, quæ vice ſunt æternæ interceſſionis, & vivæ orationis efficacium habent ut Patrem nobis concilient atque exorabilem reddant, merito dicitur intercedere.* Calvin. in Epiſt. ad Rom. c. 8.

Souls

Souls that have no confidence in the Fleſh, but are willing to receive Chriſt as he is offered in the Goſpel, theſe are to be counted among Beleivers in him, and therefore may be encouraged by his interceſſion. Nay the Scripture ſpeaks expreſly, that *He made interceſſion for the Tranſgreſſours*, Iſa 53. 12. That was one of his petitions upon the Croſſe, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do*, Luk. 23, 34. and theſe Tranſgreſſours for whom Chriſt interceded, 'tis very likely were thoſe who were charged with murthering of Chriſt, and were prickt in their Hearts, *Act.* 2. and brought unto true Repentance.

5. For the comforting of an afflicted and troubled Conſcience obſerve, how plainly the Goſpel does affirm *that Chriſt is both able and willing to ſave.*

1. 'Tis very evident that *Chriſt is able to ſave*, no guilt ſo great as to exceed the merit of his Blood, his Blood cleanſeth from *all ſin*, 1 John 1. 7. and that though it be of never ſo deep a dye, Iſa. 1. 18. *Though your ſins be as ſcarlet they ſhall be white as Snow though they be red like crimſon they ſhall be as wool.* No ſpiritual malady is *hujus medici opprobrium*, the reproach of this Phyſician. What cures has he wrought, what ſins has he pardon'd! How many that were once heinous tranſgreſſors on Earth before their Converſion, yet notwithſtanding were reconciled and regenerated by his Blood and Spirit, and are now triumphing with him in his Kingdom! O you troubled Souls! be encouraged that help is laid upon one that is Mighty, *that is able to ſave unto the uttermoſt, thoſe that come unto God by him*, *Heb.* 7. 25. The belief that Chriſt can help will you have an influence upon you. The Leper came to Chriſt upon a perſwaſion that Chriſt *could* make

make him clean, though he had no assurance that Christ *would* do it. *Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, says the Leper; Christ presently answers, *I will be thou clean, and immediately his Leprosie was cleansed*, Mat. 8. 2, 3.

2. 'Tis very evident also that Christ *is willing to save*, because this is most doubted of by troubled Spirits, I shall prove it by these arguments.

1. He declares himself *willing to save the disobedient* if they would but consent to their own Salvation. Rom. 10. ult. *All the day long have I stretched forth my hand to a stiff-necked and gain-saying people.* He stretched forth his hand as proffering pardon and life to them, and as being ready to receive them if they had been minded to return. He tells the obstinate inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, that he would often have gathered them, but they would not be gathered, Mat. 23. 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together as an hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not:* and if he be willing to gather the obstinate, surely the penitent he will not refuse; those that desire and are willing to fly under his wings for shelter.

2. He promises that he *will give rest to the heavy laden*; that he will *in no wise cast out* any that come to him. Heark how general the invitation is, *Ho every that thirsteth come to the waters*; and these waters of life may be had without mony and without price, Isa. 55. 1. They that *labour*, they that are *heavy laden*, and *all* that labour and are heavy laden, are called to come to Christ, and he assures them they shall find rest to their Souls,

Souls, *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. One said, (q) *We had better want the Sun, the Heavens, the Earth, and all the Elements; yea, and Life it self, than that one sweet Sentence of our Lord Jesus,* Come unto me all ye that Labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

3. Christ *was sent by his Father, and did come himself to this very end, that he might save.* 'Tis certain the Father sent him to save, and that both Jews and Gentiles, *Isa.* 49. 6, *And he said, 'tis a light thing that thou shouldest be my Servant to raise up the Tribes of* Jacob, *and to restore the preserved of* Israel: *I will also give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my Salvation to the ends of the Earth.* Surely our Lord is willing to do that which his Father sent him on purpose that he might do. He himself came to this end, that he might save; nay, he seeks as well as saves, which shews his willingness to save indeed. When the Shepherd seeks after the lost Sheep, we conclude him willing to find it, and to bring it home to the Fold: And when the Woman seeks after the lost piece of Silver, we conclude she is willing to get it again. And Christ seeking after Sinners, and following them with his Messengers and Word, and his Spirit which strives with them; certainly he is very willing that those who are dead should be made alive, and who are lost should be found, and made partakers of his Salvation.

4. *All fulness dwells in Christ on purpose that he may impart of it.* He charges them that are Rich in

(q) *Mallemus carere sole, cœlo, terrâ, omnibus Elementis,* &c. Senecc. *in Pædag. Christian.*

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this World to be ready to Distribute, and willing to Communicate; and can you think that he is a Niggard of his own Riches? He counselled even luke-warm *Laodicea to come to him for Gold tryed in the Fire, that she might be Rich* indeed, as before she was in her own Opinion. He is ready to satiate the weary, and to repenish every sorrowful Soul.

5. *'Tis for his Fathers Honour and his own Satisfaction when any are saved.* Therefore Christ is most willing to save. God is Honoured hereby; the Apostle gives us plainly to understand that when any obtain Redemption, and forgiveness, and are accepted in the Beloved, *This is to the praise of the Glory of the Grace of God*, Eph. 1. 6. So *v.* 12. *That we should be to the praise of his Glory, who first trusted in Christ.* 'Tis an Excellent passage of *Luther*, (r) *Though I, Lord, am unworthy to be delivered and saved, yet thou art worthy to be praised, and Glorified, and loved for ever; but thou praised thou wilt not be, nor thy Mercy Glorified, unless there are some whom thou dost save and deliver.* 'Tis also for the satisfaction of Christ to save, *Isa.* 53. 11. *He shall see of the travel of his Soul, and be satisfied.* When a Woman is in strong pain, who can in Reason question her willingness to be delivered? Surely she is desirous to see of the Travel of her Body, and how joyful is she when a Child is Born into the World? The new Birth, and the Salvation of sinners, is the Fruit of the Travel of Christ's soul; surely he is

(r) *Et si ego indignus qui eripiar & salver, Tu tamen dignus qui laudaris, glorificaris, ameris in secula; At laudari non poteris, nec misericordia glorificatur, nisi sint quos eripias à morte & salves ab inferno.* Luther. *Tom.* 2. 76. *a.*

willing

willing to see this Fruit. Away, away with unbelieving Doubts! He is willing to save, be you but willing to be saved, and you shall in no wise miss of Salvation.

6. For the Relieving of a troubled Conscience, *take Notice of the Holy Ghost, whose Office is to be a Comforter*, John 14. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth*, &c. There is great care taken by our Lord, not onely that his Church may be safe, but also that she may have Peace and Joy, and Comfort, even in this Vail of tears. These are some of the words which he speaks: *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you; I will not leave you comfortless, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*, John 14. 18. 27. and John 15. 11. *These things have I spoken to you, that my Joy might remain in you, and that your Joy may be full.* The Prophets of the Lord are Commanded to speak Comfort to his People, *Isa.* 40. 1, 2. *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my People, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to* Jerusalem, *and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, and her Iniquity is Pardoned.* And 'tis the work of the Spirit Powerfully to apply and set home these Comfortable words, that they may be effectual unto Consolation. Let humbled Souls Observe these two things.

1. The Spirit of God, who is a Comforter, *is promised unto all that ask him.* Some of you know what that Natural Affection is which Parents bear to Children: Affections descend, Parents love their Children ordinarily better than Children do their Parents. Now, with what readiness, with how good a will do Earthly

Parents

Parents give Bread unto their hungry Children; and Christ expresly says, that with *much more* readiness *will our Heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit unto them that ask him*, Luke 11. 13. This Scripture does give sufficient warrant unto any breathing to go unto God for his Spirit to enlighten, to convince, to renew and change, and at last to comfort them with as much confidence, as Children go for Necessaries unto the most tender Earthly Fathers.

2. These consolations of the Spirit especially belong *unto those who are troubled as you are.* The broken Vessel is fit for the Oyl of Joy and Gladness to be poured into it, *Isa.* 61. 1, 2. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath Anointed me to Preach good tidings to the Meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to Proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound, to Proclaim the Acceptable Year of the Lord, to Comfort all that mourn.* The Spirit does delight to comfort them that are cast down, for these will not take up with other Comforts, they prize the Spirits Consolations, they cry Grace, Grace, when they receive them, and walk humbly and warily afterward, being afraid to lose such precious things by fresh Trangressions.

7. For the Comforting of a troubled Conscience, *Behold and Wonder at Gods condescention, in that he does intreat sinners to be Reconciled*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. *Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead be Reconciled unto God.* You cannot imagine that He who has been so bitterly provoked by you should be so ready to forgive you, and so willing to be Friends

with you; but you would do well to observe, that after the Lord had promised Mercy and abundant Pardon to sinners willing to forsake their evil ways and thoughts, he presently adds, that his Mercy shall be extended to them, though they were not able to conceive it. *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.* That is, you must not measure my Mercy by yours, nor think that I am able and willing to put up and forgive no more than you. You are easily provoked, but I am slow to Anger; you are hardly Reconciled, but I am ready to forgive. I am willing to remit the greatest wrongs, and to receive the wrong-doers into favour, if they do but sincerely return to me, and are willing for the future to please and serve me. *As the Heavens are high above the Earth, so are my ways* of Kindness and Compassion, *higher than your ways; and my thoughts than your thoughts,* Isa. 55. 8, 9.

When there is a difference between any, the Inferior commonly intreats the Superiour to be Reconciled; but here the Lord, who is infinitely above us, intreats Us to be Friends, that are infinitely below him. He that does the wrong commonly intreats him whom he has wronged; but here the Lord, who has been Injured and Affronted, and Offended, and can most easily be Revenged, does intreat them that have done the Injury. He that is at the Mercy of another, commonly intreats him at whose Mercy he lies; but here the Lord, who has absolute Power to do what he will with Offenders, and can Glorifie himself in their Eternal Destruction, does intreat them to be at Peace, and to Repent, that they may be saved. Finally, he that is the depending Person commonly does intreat him upon whom he has such dependance: but here the Lord, who has no dependance at all upon sinners, nor

any

any need at all of them, does yet intreat them to come to him, who have such intire dependance upon him, that they cannot live or move or be without him, and cannot be happy but in the enjoyment of him. Oh what manner of Grace and Kindness is this! and how may drooping spirits be revived, and encouraged to hope in such a God: read the parable of the prodigal & see him by necessity driven home to his Fathers house, behold his Father running to him, embracing him though he had spent all among Harlots and in Riotous living, and then give a ghesse how much more willing the Lord is to receive returning sinners.

8. For the right comforting of a troubled Conscience, *Study well the Covenant of Grace.* The Covenant of works is not to be laid hold upon by any of the fallen Children of *Adam*; this promises life indeed but 'tis upon condition of perfect and perpetual conformity both of Heart and Life unto the Law of God. But the Covenant of Grace is vastly different from that first Covenant. Sinners may lay hold on this new Covenant, and they cannot please the Lord better than by so doing; and therefore *chusing the things that please him, & taking hold on his Covenant* are join'd together, Isa. 56. 4. If sinners being convinced of their lost estate by their iniquities, are willing to receive Christ to be their Prince and Saviour, and to turn and give themselves to God; he has ingaged in this Covenant to be their God and Father, to give them Grace and at last Glory and in the mean while to withhold no good thing from them. In this Covenant of Grace observe these four things, all which may be helpful unto your Consolation.

1. This Covenant is *well ordered*, 2 Sam. 23. 5. *He hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant ordered*

red in all things, and sure this is all my Salvation, this is all my desire. 'Tis admirably suited unto the state and desires, and wants of those that are taken into Covenant. They have no righteousness or works of their own that they may rest upon: but here is a perfect Righteousness provided, even the Righteousnesse of Christ made theirs? as their sins were made his by imputation. The Apostle *Paul* speaks plainly of the *Blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without works*, Rom. 4. 6. and 2 Cor. 5. ult. *He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousnesse of God in him.* As they have no Righteousness, so they are sick of Spiritual Plagues, but in this Covenant God has promised to cure them, Isa. 57. 18. *I have seen his ways and will heal him, I will lead him also and restore comfort unto him and his mourners.* They need cleansing because of their manifold defilements. But God promises, *that he will sprinkle clean water upon them and make them clean, and from all their filthiness, and from all their Idols he will cleanse them.* They are weak and unable to do their duty, and persevere in well-doing, but God promises to *renew their strength, so that they shall run and not be weary, and walk and not faint*, Isa. 40. ult.

2. This Covenant is *sure*. 'Tis confirmed by the Sacraments which are the Seals of this Covenant; 'tis confirmed by the oath of God, Heb. 6. 17. 18.

(s) *Quam impossibile est ut Christus in suâ justitiâ non placeat, tam impossibile ut nos fide nostrâ quâ illi inhæremus, non placeamus*, Luther. *Tom.* 2 p. 485. a.

Wherein

Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise the immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it by an Oath, that by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lye, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. When God swears in his wrath, it may make obstinate sinners to Tremble; but when he swears in his Love, it may cause humble sinners to Rejoyce. And not only the Oath of God but the Death of Christ the Testator makes this Covenant sure. A Testament though alterable while men are living, yet 'tis of force when they are dead, *Heb.* 9. 16, 17. Our Lord Jesus the Testator has undergone Death and has bequeathed unto all broken-hearted sinners, that come to him and are willing to be wholly His; Pardon, and Grace, and Peace, and Glory; and therefore all this shall be surely given them.

3. The Covenant is *Everlasting*, the things therein promised are durable, and that love which humble and believing Souls have an interest in, is unchangeable. The Covenant shall never fail on Gods part, Isa. 54. 10. *The Mountains shall depart and the Hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy upon thee.* And he has engaged it shall not fail on the part of his People, Jer. 32. 40. *I will make with them an Everlasting Covenant that I will not turn away from them to do them good* (but how Lord if they fall back and deal treacherously?) No, sayes he, *I will put my Fear into their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

4. The Promises of this New Covenant *are made good for the Lords own sake, not for ours,* well may

it be called a Covenant of Grace, for whatsoever is given by vertue of it is bestowed freely. Let free Grace be well studied, and all objections from unworthinesse will fall to the ground: God never pardon'd any because they did Deserve a pardon, but all that he has pardon'd, had they been dealt with according to their sins had been condemned everlastingly. O you troubled Consciences hark how the Lord speaks, Isa. 43. 24. 25. *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins and even wearied me with thy iniquities*, One would have thought that hereupon God should have said, I will now make thee to groan under my wrath, and my wearied patience shall be turned into fiery indignation. Oh no the Lord instead of breathing forth anger, abounds with Kindness, *I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* And as for his own sake he promises to pardon the guilty, so also to cleanse and renew the defiled; *A new heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, I will put within you my own Spirit, and he shall cause you to walk in my Statutes: I will save you from all your Uncleannesses*, Ezek. 36. 26. 27, 28, And then it follows v. 32. *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known to you, be ashamed and confounded for your own wayes, O House of* Israel.

9. For the relieving of a troubled Conscience, *heed those encouragements and assurances which are given unto such as desire after Grace and Holiness.* Christ pronounces *them blessed that Hunger and Thirst*, that is, which desire earnestly *after Righteousness*, Mat. 5. 6. God has promised to *fulfill the desires of them that fear him.* But those under trouble of Spirit are full of Holy desires; let them not be dismay'd, *all their de-*

sire

sire is before God, and their groaning is not hid from him. I told you before, that a lazy wish after Grace signifies nothing where there is stronger desire to continue in sin, and that desire keeps a man under the power of sin and hinders his turning unto God. But this is certainly true, *that a true desire after Grace, does argue Truth of Grace.* If you ask me how true desires after Grace may be known, I shall answer in these particulars.

1. True desires after spiritual things are *grounded upon Judgement and Understanding.* *David's* mind was enlightned to see the goodness, al sufficiency, and glory of God, and therefore he cryes out *my Soul Thirsteth for God, for the living God, Psal.* 42. 2. *Through the precepts of the Lord he got understanding,* and perceived the Evil of sin, and upon this followed Hatred of it, which does include a desire to have it totally subdued.

2. True desires after spiritual things *are not to be diverted,* but do prevail whatever is cast in the way. Let the World and the God of it make never so big offers, all is undervalued in comparison of the favour of God, and fellowship with him, Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee.* All things else are counted losse, and dung compared with the Lord Jesus, and the Pearle of price.

3. True desires *are Universal, after All kind of Grace.* Strength against every Corruption is longed for, and 'tis lookt upon as a blessed thing to be filled with all the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by

Jesus Christ unto the Glory and Praise of God, *Phil.* 1.

4. True desires *put Souls upon earnest seeking*. There will be frequency and fervency in Prayer, a serious attendance upon God in his Ordinances, pains will not be grudged, that are taken for the securing of a Soul, for the obtaining such excellent things as the loving kindnesse of God, the Grace of his Spirit, and a Kingdom that cannot be moved. *One thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek after*, Psal. 27. 4. I might also add that these desires *are permanent*, not pangs that soon wear off; but they do abide: there is also grief and pain, because there is so little of that which is desired, so little life and softness of heart, and purity, and though never so much is given, yet they are unsatiable here on Earth. These desires will be fully satisfied with no lesse than the seeing of God face to face above, Psal. 17. 15. *As for me I will behold thy Face in Righteousnesse, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likenesse.*

10. For the comforting of an afflicted Conscience cast your eyes upon *these notorious Sinners* (t) *which have obtained Mercy*. Was *Saul* an ordinary sinner, that had been a Blasphemer? or *David* that had been guilty of Murther and Adultery? or *Solomon* that is charged with idolatry? or the *Corinthians* that abused themselves with mankind, besides several other abominations? What Miracles of free Grace are these! and

(t) *Deus non filios sed veros peccatores salvat, quia non fit vera est ejus misericordia.* Luther. Tom. 2. p. 187. a.

yet

yet it has not done the most it can. Let us suppose a greater sinner than any mentioned in Scripture, he is not too great for God to forgive, if himself is willing to forsake his wickedness. The Lord has proclaimed his Name. 34. 6, 7. He is a God *Merciful*, this may relieve us when sensible of our misery; he is *Gracious*, this may encourage us against our vileness and unworthiness; he is *Long-suffering*, this may keep us from sinking into despair though 'twas long before we thought of turning to him: He is *abundant in Goodness and Truth*, though we are never so empty here is enough to fill us: He *keeps Mercy for thousands*, his Treasures are not exhausted by former ages, we may go to him and be enriched, *he forgives iniquity transgression and sin*. Let none then say *there is no Hope*, of what sorts or sizes soever their sins be.

But here let me Caution again, that no sin be secretly cherished, for if the cause of trouble remain, how can Conscience be truly Comforted? In good earnest set upon the Mortification of all the Members of the Body of sin, but especially pluck out the right Eye, and cut off the right Hand. Let not thy Soul spare any Lust, 'twill be more fatal to thee than *Saul*'s sparing *Agag*, which cost him his Kingdom. *Herbert* does very ingenuously and truly tell us, that Peace of Conscience is not to be attained, unless there be a flight of sin. *The Church, page* 117. 118.

Sweet Peace, where dost thou dwell? I humbly crave,
Let me once know;
I sought thee in a secret Cave,
And ask'd if Peace were there.
A hollow wind did seem to answer, No:
Go seek elsewhere.

I did; and going did a Rainbow note:
Surely thought I,
This is the Lace of Peaces Coat:
I will ſearch out the matter.
But while I lookt, the Clouds immediatly
Did break and ſcatter.

Then went I to a Garden, and did ſpy
A gallant flower,
The Crown Imperial: Sure, ſaid I,
Peace at the root muſt dwell.
But when I digg'd, I ſaw a Worm devour
What ſhew'd ſo well.

At length I met a rev'rend good old man;
Whom when for Peace
I did demand, he thus began:
There was a Prince of Old
At *Salem* dwelt, who liv'd with good increaſe
Of Flock and Fold.

He ſweetly liv'd; yet ſweetneſs did not ſave
His Life from Foes.
But after Death, out of his Grave
There ſprang twelve ſtalks of Wheat:
Which many wondring at, got ſome of thoſe
To Plant and Set.

It proſper'd ſtrangely, and did ſoon diſperſe
Through all the Earth,
For they that taſte it, do rehearſe,
That Virtue lies therein;
A ſecret Virtue, bringing Peace and Mirth
By flight of ſin.

Take

Take of this Grain, which in my Garden grows,
And grows for you;
Make Bread of it: and that repoſe,
And Peace, which every where
VVith ſo much earneſtneſs you do purſue,
Is onely there.

I have laid down ſeveral grounds of Conſolation for troubled Conſciences, it will be needful now to Anſwer ſome Objections they are wont to make againſt all that Comfort which is tendred to them.

Object. 1. Some do cry out, that *their ſins are*, primæ Magnitudinis, *of the firſt Magnitude*; that guilt which they have contracted is ſo vaſt, and themſelves are ſo inexcuſable in their wickedneſs, that they cannot let it once enter into their thoughts, that ever God ſhould pardon or ſave ſuch provoking wretches and rebels as They have been. They call to remembrance what they have been, and what they have done; their Iniquities which they have committed have been of a very hainous Nature; and as to their Number, what was ſaid concerning *Abraham's* Seed, may very well be applied here; they have been ſo many as the Stars of the Sky in multitude, and as the Sand which is by the Sea-ſhore innumerable. To ſpeak Truth, the Greatneſs of ſin is the grand Objection againſt Comfort.

Anſw. 1. VVhen the greatneſs of ſin cauſes perplexity, behold *how much greater the Mercy of the Lord is*. This Mercy is high as Heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper than Hell, what canſt thou know? The meaſure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader

broader than the Sea: But yet as great as 'tis, it does not give the least encouragement to presumption, but against despair and despondency it may be a mighty Antidote. Contemplate the Mercy of God in Christ; eye his sufferings, which were very great; eye the greatness of him that suffered, and then you will see sin (*) exceeded by the sufferings of Christ, and the Mercy of God. Hark to the Apostle, *Rom.* 5. 20. *Moreover the Law entred that the Offence might abound, but where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound, that as sin hath Reigned unto Death, even so might Grace Reign through Righteousness unto Eternal Life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Though Souls are sensible never so much of the abounding of sin, Grace does superabound; let Man do as much as he can in a way of wickedness, the Lord can out-do him in a way of Grace and Mercy.

That is a notable promise, *Mic.* 7. 19. having said, *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning Iniquity, delighting in Mercy?* it follows, *thou wilt cast all their sin into the depth of the Sea.* In the deepest part of the Sea, the greatest Mountains, if they could be cast in, would be swallowed up as well as Mole-hills. Divine Mercy is such a depth, it can cover the greatest sins as well as the smallest; and being once cast into this depth, they shall never rise again unto the sinners Condemnation, any more than things cast into the deepest part of the Ocean can ever be fetched up again.

2. In Scripture you may find *the greatness of sin used*

(*) *Peccatum est sicut Magnus Goliab, & omnibus viribus oppugnat Conscientiam; sed si credas in Dominum Jesum pro te mortuum, omnia peccatum singula levius & infirmius.* Luther. Tom. 3. p. 367. b.

and

and pleaded as an Argument for the obtaining of Mercy and forgiveness. Listen to the *Psalmist*, Psal. 25. 11. *For thy Name-sake, O Lord, pardon my Iniquity, for it is great*; this is a strong Argument, for the greater sin is, the more Glorious is the Lords Name and Grace in passing it by. Just as 'tis more for a mans Honour to forgive the Debt of a Thousand pound than of a few pence onely. The Lord is willing to Honour his own Mercy, and ready to forgive much: But he expects that they to whom much is given, should love much, as there is very good reason.

Object. 2. Those in trouble of Conscience do Object, They fear *'tis now too late to come to Christ, and turn to God*; indeed if they had accepted of invitations in time, it might have been well with them, but now they are afraid the Sun is set and will never rise more; and that the day of Grace is past and gone, and that the Night of Darkness and Trouble upon their Souls is but the fore-runner of the blackness of darkness for ever.

Answ. 1. *Who tells thee that the day of Grace is past?* If it be Satan, surely such a Liar is not to be believed; besides he contradicts himself, for heretofore he used to tell thee, 'twas time enough hereafter to Repent. If it be the sad surmise of thine own heart, surely such an Ignorant and deceitful heart as thine is not to be credited, as if it were infallible. If God tells thee so, then 'tis either in his Word, but thou canst not shew the place where he has said it; or by some extraordinary Revelation; but this thou canst not, if sober-minded, pretend unto.

2. Remember *some have been called at the eleventh hour*

hour of the day; nay, the Thief upon the Cross but one moment before Night; who then can peremptorily say that the day of Grace is past, as long as Life remains? Let not presuming sinners make an ill use of this which has been said; for they that put off Repentance because of the lasting of the day of Grace, before they are aware, may drop into the Grave and Hell, and then they will Repent for ever, that they did not Repent sooner; but their Repentance will be too late, and to no purpose.

3. If *your need of Grace be seen, and Christ and Grace are valued above Gold that perishes*, and all the Pleasures and Honours of the World, which are onely for a season: The day of Grace is so far from being past, that Grace is really wrought in you. If the Spirit had not been, and were not still really at work in you, you would not have such desires to be Sanctified throughout, as well as Justified from all Offences.

Object. 3. Some do further say, that *they are Judicially hardened*; they can think of God and Christ, and Sin, and Death and Hell, and yet their hearts are no more affected than if they were stocks or stones; upon this they conclude, that God has spoken concerning them, as he did concerning *Israel* of Old, *Isa.* 6. 10. *Make the heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and Convert, and be healed.*

Answ. 1. Your dulness and unaffectedness may possibly proceed *not so much from your Hearts, as from distemper and cloudiness of your Heads*: and if in all things

things else you find a kind of stupidness, and unconcernedness even about your worldly matters also: you must not from distemper of Body conclude the judicial hardning of your Hearts.

2. Those in Scripture which were judicially hardned, *never complained of their hardness*, but this is your complaint and burthen. *Pharaoh* and the Pharisees were both hardned in a way of judgment, but though *Pharaoh* was sensible of other Plagues, yet not at all of this which was incomparably the worst of all the Plagues of *Ægypt*; he cries out, pray to the Lord to take away the Locusts, the Frogs, the Thunder and Hail; but never, pray to the Lord to take away the Heart of Stone from him. And as for the Pharisees, they thought themselves Righteous, and whole, and slighted a Physician and Saviour, for they thought they could do well enough without him.

3. You are not *altogether past feeling, because you feel your own hardness*, and 'tis a mercy that you know this Plague of your own heart. Oh go to the Physician who has promised to cure it, and to give an heart of Flesh to you. This is Gods way and method to make sinners sensible of their hardness, that he may soften them; of their blindness, that he may give them eye-Salve; of their filthiness, that he may cleanse them; of their guilt that he may pardon them; of their emptiness that he may fill them.

Object. 4. They under trouble of Spirit do further object, *alas we are not able to come to Christ*, though our Eternal Salvation does lye on't; our Consciences are wounded but we cannot come for cure and ease.

Answ. 1. Is

Answ. 1. Is this a small matter, that God has *made you sensible of your natural inability*? how many do mistake, and think they have a power to help themselves, and this hinders them from seriously applying themselves unto Him that alone is able to save. You see, and say, you have no might, 'tis well, a promise belongs to you, *Isa.* 40. 29. *He giveth Power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength*, i. e. To them that see they have no might, for all have really none.

2. Though you cannot come to Christ for Grace and Comfort, *yet the Father can draw you*; and have not you an Heart to cry to him to do this for you? What's your Language in secret Prayer? Is it not *Draw me, and I will run after thee*? Is it not *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*? Thus spake the Spouse, *Cant.* 1. Thus spake *Ephraim*, of Old, *Jer.* 31. and both were heard; nay, the Lord says, I have *surely heard* Ephraim, surely your cryes for drawing and turning shall not be in vain.

3. You say, you are not able to come to Christ; but are you *willing* to come to him? Yes, pray who has made you able to be thus willing, but onely that God *who works to will of his own good Pleasure*? If you are willing to come, you are able to come; for your coming lies in being willing. If you are willing to have the Son, you have him, and Life by him, (*) for 'tis with your Wills that you receive him, and so have Power to become the Children of God. The Apostle

(*) *Non pedibus sed affectu, non migrando sed amando venitur ad Christum.* Augustin.

tells

tells us, *That with the Heart man believes unto Righteousness*, Rom. 10. 10. By the Heart, in Scripture, is commonly meant the Will; so that if the Will consents to have Christ, as Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption: Here is indeed that Faith which is Justifying and Saving. Christ having taken the Will, has taken the main Fort, that by Nature stands out against him, and Commands the whole Soul.

Object. 5. Some under trouble of Conscience cry out, *They have been enlightned, and under Conviction heretofore; but since their Illumination and Convictions they have fallen away*; and therefore now they conclude, there is nothing remains, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and of fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.

Answ. 1. *All back-sliding, though grosse, is not the unpardonable sin. David* and *Peter* were both enlightned, both did fall, and that into gross wickedness, and yet both Repented, both were pardoned, and restored to favour, and both are now in Glory.

2. Even *Back-sliders are called upon to return.* The Children of *Israel* had played the Harlots with many Lovers, they had spoken and done evil things as they could, and yet many times in one Chapter, *Jer.* 3. they are called after to come home to God, from whom they had so deeply Revolted: though therefore you ought to mourn, and be in bitterness for your Apostacies and unstedfastness, yet you must not mourn without hope.

3. Promises are made to Back-sliders, if they return, *of Mercy and Healing*, Jer. 3.12. *Go and Proclaim these words towards the North, and say, Return, thou back-sliding* Israel, *saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you, for I am Merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep Anger for ever.* And v. 22. again he says, *Return ye back-sliding Children, and I will heal your back-slidings.* O you poor sinners, that are troubled for your back-slidings, catch hold of these words, as *Benhadad's* Servants did of the words of the King of *Israel*, and say, *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

Object. 6. After all, some may say, Though we cannot deny that we are willing to part with every sin, and to have our Hearts cleansed; though we desire God to be our Father and Portion, and Christ to be our Prince, and Head, and Saviour, and Husband; yet we are afraid our Hearts are not right, because all this may *be meerly for fear of Hell*, and because unless we do all this, 'tis impossible that Hell should be escaped.

Answ. 1. *You ought to be afraid of Hell*: Why is such a dreadful place spoken of, but that the Sons of Men might dread the coming thither? Our Lord Exhorts his Disciples to fear God upon this very Account, *that he was able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, Luke 12. 5. Mat. 10. 28.

2. A fear of Hell never, that we read of, carried Reprobates very far, or surely not so far as to make them willing to cast away every sin, and to accept of whole

whole Christ, and to give up themselves, Bodies, Souls, Health, Strength, Time, all to him, as appears in *Felix, Agrippa, Herod,* and others.

3. If you desire Cleansing and Sanctification, 'tis a sign that sin it self is a burthen to you, as well as the Punishment of it feared by you: If this might be otherwise avoided, could you be contented to be slaves to sin still?

4. I grant, it may be said concerning prizing of Christ, chusing of God, and endeavouring to please him in all things; that you must go to Hell if you don't do all this. But where does the Scripture say, that though you do all this, you may go to Hell after all? 'Tis true, unless you are sincere, you must go to Hell; but it does not follow, that though you are sincere, you may go to Hell notwithstanding.

5. Do not you look upon the Lord as all-sufficient? as the chiefest good? Do not you see an emptiness in all the Creatures, and the evil that is in sin? Is not sin hated, the Creature scorned in comparison of this God? If so, 'tis a sign that the goodness of God does take you, and affect your Hearts, as well as the fear of Hell affright you.

6. If there be a will to be Sanctified throughout, and to be turned with your whole Heart unto God; this is not the product of slavish Fear of Hell, *but is really the work of the Lords Spirit.* 'Tis he that works *both to will and to do of his good pleasure,* Phil 2. The most startling Truths, and astonishing considerations would never be able *of themselves* to make you willing to divorce your Lusts, and to accept of Christ upon

Gospel-terms If therefore you are brought unto this, that you prize the Lord Jesus at so high a rate, as to consent to part with every sin for his sake, and to follow the Lamb in what way soever it shall please him to lead you; you may warrantably conclude, That the Spirit has been at Work in you, and having *begun a good work in you*, he will compleat it. And you may confidently say, with *David*, *Psal.* 138. 8. *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me; thy Mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever, forsake not the work of thine own hands.*

USE IV. Of Exhortation. Let it be *the care of you all to have a good Conscience.* The Apostle *Paul* in the Text is set forth as a good Example for all to follow, as a very fair Copy for all to write after. It is Counsel ordinarily given to Tradesmen, *Keep your Shops, and your Shops will keep you.* So I may say, *Look well to your Consciences, and your Consciences will look well to you.* If there be an Heaven upon Earth, 'tis a good Conscience; if there be an Hell upon Earth, 'tis a bad Conscience. I shall second my Exhortation with these following Arguments:

1. He that has a good Conscience can *look upward to God with Confidence*, 1 John 3. 21, 22. *Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his Commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.* With what boldness may such come to the Throne of Grace! For God is their Friend, nay, their Father, and how infinitely does he surpass all other Parents in Wisdom, Affection, Tenderness, Sufficiency! and therefore expectation may

may be raised to a great height of receiving much from him.

A good Conscience sees smiles in Gods Face: Fury is not in him, all his wrath is taken away, and *his Countenance doth behold the upright*, Psal. 11. *ult.* God is in Covenant with these upright ones, and with Joy they may study the Attributes of God, and see how all are engaged for them. He is Wise for them, Good for them, Faithful for them, All-sufficient for them; nay, his Justice, being satisfied by his Son, is for them too. He is Infinite, Eternal, and unchangeable, and all this makes for them; and how great is their Happiness, that such a God is theirs! *David's Meditation of God was sweet*; God was his Joy, *nay, his exceeding Joy.* The Lord being his Portion, how does he exult in his spirit, saying, *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea, I have a very goodly Heritage*, Psal. 16. 5, 6.

2. He that has a good Conscience can look *inward with Satisfaction.* The dissatisfaction of a bad Conscience is great, and most Afflicting; when a Man retires to himself, and is tortured by himself, and his self-reflecting thoughts prove as so many stings to pierce and pain him; what a case is that Man in? These kind of Tribulations find a Man out, and there is no flying from them, as *Augustine* (x) Observes, and

(x) *Inter omnes tribulationes animæ humanæ nulla est major quàm conscientia delictorum, nam si ibi vulnus non sit, sanumque sit quod hominis quod conscientia vocatur, ubicunque alibi passus fuerit tribulationes, illuc confugiet, & ibi inveniet Deum. Si autem ibi requies non sit propter abundantiam iniquitatis, quid facturus est homo? quo confugiet? fugiet ab agro ad civitatem, à publico ad domum, à domo ad cubiculum, & sequitur tribulatio. A cubiculo*

am quo fugiat non habet nisi interius ad cubile suum. Porro si ibi tumultus, si fumus iniquitatis, si flamma sceleris non illuc potest confugere: pellitur enim inde, & cum inde pellitur à seipso pellitur, & ecce hostem suum invenit, quo confugeret. Seipsum quo fugiturus est? Quocunque fugerit; se, talem trahit post se & quocunque talem traxerit se, cruciat se. A seipsa sunt tribulationes quæ inveniunt hominem nimis; acerbiores enim non sunt; at tanto sunt acerbiores, quanto sunt interiores. Augustin. *Enarrat.* in Psal. 45. Tom. 8. pag. *mihi* 419.

more inward they are, they are the more bitter.

But now he whose Conscience is good, as *Solomon* speaks, *is satisfied from himself.* (*) He has Meat to eat which the World knows not of; his sincere endeavour to do the will of God satisfies him better than the choicest Fare and Delicates. *Luther*, whose Conscience was clear, who Preached Christ purely, and Loved Christ sincerely, has one strange Expression, *Miser sit qui possit, ego non possum.* Let him be miserable that can be miserable, I for my part cannot be miserable. His God and his Conscience were such a Feast, and Joy and Satisfaction to him, that he knew 'twas not in the Power of Earth or Hell to daunt or hurt him.

Oh, what unutterable contentation is there in the Heart, that upon reflection and search, finds it self the Temple of the Spirit, the Habitation where the Father and the Son do make their abode: That finds it self *Clothed with white Rayment*, Christ's Righteousness, *Enriched with that Gold tried in the Fire*, Rev.

(*) *Fragilibus innititur qui adventio Iesus est; exibit gaudium quod intraxit: at illud ex se ortum, fidele, firmumque est; castis & ad extremum usque prosequitur.* Seneca, Epist. 98.

3. 18. made partaker of the Divine Nature, Adorned with the Image of God, filled with the Graces of the Spirit, and thereby ſees it fitting for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

3. He that has a good Conſcience *can look downward, and ſee himſelf ſecured.* Never any one with a good Conſcience went to the place of Torment, but onely thoſe who refuſed to have a good Conſcience, or made ſhip-wrack of it. Though Hell be prepared for the Devil, yet he has not the Keys of that place, but they hang at Chriſt's Girdle, *Rev.* 1, 18. *I am he that Liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the Keys of Hell, and of Death.* And certainly, ſince Chriſt has the Keys of Hell, no Believers, whoſe Conſciences are truly good, ſhall be flung in thither, for theſe are the Members of his Body; and the Head loves his Members too well, to ſuffer them to be thrown into Everlaſting fire.

A good Conſcience by the eye of Faith looks down, and takes Notice of the Damned in their Miſery, ſees them groaning under the fierceneſs of the Almighty's wrath, ſees them fed upon by the Worm that dies not, and tormented in that flame which ſhall never be extinguiſhed, and bound faſt in thoſe Chains of Darkneſs, which ſhall never be unlooſed; and then rejoyces to ſee it ſelf ſafe under the wing of the Lord Jeſus; rejoyces in that Deliverance and Salvation from future wrath, whereof Chriſt is the Author.

4. He that has a good Conſcience *can look upon his outward comforts and take comfort in them.* What he has is not a Snare to him, but attended with a bleſſing; upon this ſcore the Pſalmiſt ſayes, *a little that a Righteous man has is better than the Riches of many*

wicked, Pſal. 37. 16. A good Conſcience does in a great meaſure cure that vanity and vexation of Spirit that is in the Creature; for when theſe outward enjoyments are given with the Divine Bleſſing then as *Solomon* ſpeaks *no ſorrow is added with them.*

The upright man does taſte the love of God in the Food he eats, and though it be but a dinner of Herbs, yet this love makes it better than a ſtalled Ox with the Lords Curſe and Hatred. He feels the love of God in the Clothes he wears and though of coarſer cloth, yet they are better than the Purple, and fine Linnen and coſtly array of that rich man, that received all his good things in this preſent world, and after was turned into Hell poor and naked. All the gifts he receive are indeed bleſſings to one that's Righteous, for he has the Giver with them, and is brought ſtill nearer unto the Giver by them.

5. He that has a good Conſcience can *look upon adverſity without dread.* When the Apoſtle was preſſed out of meaſure even above ſtrength, yet a good Conſcience was his rejoycing. *Bias* the Philoſopher being asked what was difficult? anſwered τλῶν ὅταν τὸ χεῖρον μεταβολὴν ἐυγενῶς ἐνεγκεῖν. (y) *To bear with fortitude a change in our condition for the worſe.* Now a clear Conſcience will be very helpful unto ſuch Fortitude and Patience. *Job* is of a ſudden ſtript of his glory, rob'd of his vaſt eſtate, and though a Prince before, made poor to a Proverb, and yet Conſcience bears him up, and makes him able to ſay. *The Lord*

(y) Diogen. Laert. *in vitâ* Biantis, p. *mihi.* 60.

has

has given, and the Lord has taken, bleſsed be the name of the Lord, Job. 1. 21. Sir *Henry Wotton* has a very good deſcription of an happy life, wherein he ſhews that a good Conſcience is the beſt armour, and the ſafeſt retreat whatever happens.

How happy is he born and Taught
That ſerveth not anothers will,
Whoſe armour is his honeſt Thought,
And ſimple Truth his utmoſt skill!

Whoſe paſſions not his maſters are,
Whoſe Soul is ſtill prepar'd for death
Untied unto the World by care
Of publick fame, or private breath.

Who envies none that chance does raiſe,
Nor Vice hath ever underſtood
How deepeſt wounds are given by praiſe
Nor rules of State but rules of Good.

Who hath his Life from rumors freed
Whoſe Conſcience is his ſtrong retreat,
Whoſe ſtate can neither flatt'rers feed
Nor ruine make oppreſſors great.

Who God doth late and early pray,
More of his Grace than Gifts to lend,
And entertains the harmleſs day
With a Religious book or Friend.

This man is freed from ſervile bands
Of hope to riſe or fear to fall,

Lord

Lord of himself though not of Lands,
And having nothing yet hath all.

A good Conscience will tend very much to fix the Heart, so as that evil tidings shall not be so terrifying and dismaying. Hark what the Psalmist sayes, *Unto the upright there ariseth light in obscurity, surely he shall not be moved for ever, he shall not be afraid* (†) *of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord, Psal.* 112. 467.

6. He that hath a good Conscience can look upon *all the baits of the Tempter and despise them.* Satan is not able to compell and force us to sin; neither has he power to determine the will of man to that which is evil; as the Lord has to determine it unto that which is good, for then sin would principally lye at Satans door, as all the Glory of that good which is done by us, is to be ascribed unto God. The Devil did not thrust the forbidden fruit into *Eve's* Mouth, whether she would or no; but only did cunningly and strongly perswade her to eat of it. In like manner he deals with us, he layes his baits (z) before us, and endeavours our ruine by offering what does please us.

(†) *Justum & tenacem propositi virum*
Si fractis illabatur orbis
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

(z) *Unam esse omnium rem pulcherrimam, eoque pulchriorem si vacet populo, neque plausum captans, se tantum ipsa delectet. Quinetiam mihi quidem laudabiliora videntur omnia, quæ sine venditatione & sine populo recte fiunt, non quo fugiendus sit (omnia enim bene facta in luce se collocari volunt) sed tamen nullum theatrum virtuti conscientiâ majus est.* Cicero. *Tuscul. Quæstion.* l. 3. pag. mihi, 146.

But

But a good Conſcience is deaf unto the Devil, and ſcorns his offers, for his offers are to the loſſe of the Righteous man. What are the riches of the World which Satan talks ſo much of, compared with the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt? what are the pleaſures of ſin, compared with peace of Conſcience? what are all Earthly advantages and preferments compared with Communion with God, and the Light of his Countenance?

A good Conſcience is firmly perſwaded *that 'tis good for us to draw near to God*, Pſal. 73. ult. to be near to Him is for our Honour, Intereſt, Safety, Delight and ſatisfaction, and hereupon the Believer rejects Satan with an Holy contempt and indignation; for he ſees 'tis folly as well as wickedneſs to leave his *Father's Houſe where there is bread enough and to ſpare*, and to go *feed upon huſks in the farr Country*.

7. He that hath a good Conſcience can look upon *death with deſire*, which is ſo exceeding terrible unto others. The Believer may indeed be willing to live that he may ſerve his generation according to the will of God, and that he may do that for Chriſt on Earth which he cannot do when he comes to heaven; but his Conſcience being pure and peaceable, having an aſſurance what a kindneſs death will do him, He does with the Apoſtle *deſire to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt*, which is far better, Phil. 1. 23.

There is profit, pleaſure and honor in a Believers departing, no wonder if he deſires to depart. There is profit in it, *to dye is gain* ſays the Apoſtle, he gains more grace in the inſtant of his diſſolution, than he got all his dayes before; for upon death his Spirit is made perfect in Holineſs. There is pleaſure in death, for ſometimes 'tis ſweetned with raviſhing tranſports of

Spirit

Spirit, and it is the Porter to open the gate into full and Everlasting joyes, having put an end both to sin and sorrow. Finally, there is honour in Death, for the Believer having *fought a good Fight, and finished his course, and kept the Faith, he goes to receive the Crown of Righteousness.*

8. He that hath a good Conscience can look *into Eternity and be filled with joy unspeakable and glorious.* That is one of the Richest jewels in the Crown of Life that it fades not away. The good Conscience looks up to Heaven, fixes its eye upon God, sees that bosom in which the sanctified Soul must lye and (*a*) rest forever. After millions of years are spent, praise will be continued, delight will be as green and fresh as ever, there will be no loathing of that heavenly *Manna*; after so many thousands of ages as there have been minutes since the Creation, Joy in heaven will be as far from an end, as it was when first of all it did begin.

Mortality and change, are the disgrace of all temporal delights and pleasures, but a good Conscience rejoyces (and well it may do so) in a better and enduring substance; it sees how sure, how near Eternal Life is, and upon this follow raptures of pleasure.

(a) *Da Pater omnipotens menti conscendere sedem!*
Da fontem lustrare boni! da luce repertâ
In te conspicuos animi defigere visus!
Dissice terrenas nebulas & pondera molis,
Atque tuo splendore mica; Tu namque serenum,
Tu requies tranquilla piis. Te cernere finis,
Principium vector, dux, semita terminus idem.
Boetius, *de Consolat. Phil.* l. 3. met. 9. pag. *mihi* 88.

Cyprian

Cyprian (*b*) does excellently ſet forth this full and Everlaſting happineſs of the Saints in Heaven. *They* (ſays he) *ſhall ſee God and Rejoyce and be Delighted, they ſhall Enjoy that Glory, and be ſwallowed up in that Joy for Ever-more. There they ſhall not only taſte how ſweet the Lord is, but ſhall be filled and ſatisfied with his wonderful ſweetneſs, nothing ſhall be wanting, nothing ſhall be hurtful, Chriſt being preſent will ſatiate all their longing. They ſhall not grow old, or weak, or dye any more: There will not be Concupiſence in the Members, nor Rebellion in the Fleſh againſt the Spirit, but Mans Nature will be fully reſtored, and Sanctified and Healed, and ſo will remain without any ſpot or wrinkle Everlaſtingly. Finally, God will be all in all, and his immediate and glorious preſence will ſo abundantly fill the Saints, that they ſhall not be able to deſire more.*

You ſee now in ſeveral reſpects how deſirable 'tis to have good Conſcience, whereſoever ſuch a Conſcience looks, upwards, downwards, inwards, forwards, ſtill there is peace and Conſolation. Oh look

(*b*) *Exultabunt Sancti in gloriâ, videbunt Deum & gaudebunt. Illi non guſtabunt quam ſuavis ſit Dominus, ſed implebuntur & ſatiabuntur dulcedine mirificâ; nihil eis deerit, nihil oberit, omne deſiderium eorum Chriſtus præſens implebit. Non ſeneſcent, non abeſcent, non putreſcent: amplius perpetua ſanitas, fœlix Eternitas beatitudnis illius ſufficientiam confirmabunt. Non erit concupiſcentia in membris, non ultra exurget rebellio carnis, ſed totus hominis ſtatus pudicus & pacificus, ſana ex integro Natura ſine omni maculâ & rugâ deinceps permanebit. Erit denique Deus omnia in omnibus, & illius præſentia omne animæ & corporis implebit appetitus.* Cyprian. *Serm. de Chriſt. Aſcenſ.*

into

into your Consciences, and see what they are, whether good or bad; and oh that all bad Consciences may be utterly restless till they are made good ones.

USE IV. *Of Advice unto them whose Consciences are good,* which have been cleansed and quieted by the blood of Christ, and by the VVord and Spirit of Grace. My Advice is in these particulars:

1. Be very *thankfull for this unspeakable Gift of a good Conscience.* The largest Empire in the VVorld, a Crown of pure Gold upon the Head, is nothing near so great a Blessing as a pure and peaceable Conscience. I may use the Angels Salutation to the Virgin *Mary,* unto every Saint that has such a Conscience. *Hail, thou that art highly Favoured! The Lord is with thee, Blessed art thou among the Sons of Men.* 'Tis a Mercy, and a great one, to have a good Name, to be in good Health, to have good Eyes, and other Senses perfect; to have good Natural Parts, to have a competency of the good things of this Life, to Live in good and Peaceable Days; but to have a good Conscience, is better than any of these, nay, than all these put together. To excite you unto Thankfulness for a good Conscience, think of three sorts of Persons: Of the Secure, of the Troubled, of the Damned.

1. Think of *the secure,* what woful work are they employed about, they sin boldly, and dare to be damned for that love which they bear to their Fleshly and Worldly Lusts: How? say they, must we part with these, if we will go to Heaven! Nay, we will keep them, though we go to Hell along with them. These secure sinners *are like one that lies down in the midst of the*

the Sea, or as he that ſleeps upon the top of a Maſt: They are like unto *Solomon's* Drunkard, *they ſtrike themſelves, but ſay, they are not ſick; they beat themſelves, but for the preſent feel it not,* Prov. 23. 34, 35. And who is it that makes you to differ from the moſt Profane and ſtupid ſinner upon the Face of the Earth? Admire and Magnifie that diſtinguiſhing Grace and Love which has granted you a well-grounded Peace, when ſo many Thouſands onely cry Peace to themſelves, but are every moment in danger of Wrath and Hell, and everlaſting Trouble.

2. Think of *the troubled in Spirit,* to make you the more thankful for a good Conſcience. While your Souls are at eaſe in the Arms and Embraces of the Lord Jeſus; how many complain of broken Bones! How many do make their Beds to ſwim, and water their Couches with their Tears! How many cry out, that Terrors are turned upon them, and purſue their Souls as the wind, and that when they call unto the Lord, he is ſo far from regarding, that with his ſtrong hand he does oppoſe himſelf againſt them, *Job* 30. 15. 20, 21. Meditate well upon the torture of a wounded Spirit, and then let all that is within you bleſs the Lord for Healing you.

3. Think of *the Damned,* whoſe Conſciences are in a perpetual Rage, who are Racked with Deſpair, and whoſe Torment ſhall never end. They are Fetter'd in the ſame Chains of Darkneſs with the Apoſtate Angels, and theſe Chains are Everlaſting. Ah, now their Wounds are incurable, becauſe their Phyſitian all their days was ſlighted, and their Wounds were made light of, and no Healing is to be at all expected. And you that are Saints, if Rich Grace had not taken

hold

hold of you, would have been of the number of theſe miſerable Souls; if you had been dealt with according to your deſervings, you would have been weeping and wailing in outer Darkneſs, that are now rejoycing in Hope of the Glory of God, ſurely ſuch differencing Kindneſs calls aloud for Praiſe.

2. You that have a good Conſcience *be Compaſſionate to them whoſe Conſciences are evil:* They need your Pity, becauſe they have none to themſelves, and your pity may not be altogether unprofitable to them. Reprove them for their evil ways with mildneſs and wiſdom, and faithfulneſs; *hate them not ſo much, as to ſuffer ſin to lie upon them*, Lev. 19. 17. *Cain* indeed did ſay, *Am I my Brothers Keeper?* But be you of a contrary Spirit; if you ſee your Brother go in the Road to Hell, warn him, and by warning endeavour to ſtop him. If your Neighbours Houſe were on Fire at Midnight, and he himſelf faſt aſleep, oh, what pains would you take! How would you pull him out of his Bed, how loud would you cry, *Fire, Fire*, to wake him! Alas, the ſinner with a ſecure Conſcience is in a far worſe caſe; he is faſt aſleep upon the brink of the burning Lake; and have you nothing to ſay to him? Oh, that you would put on Bowels, and ſpeak for Souls, and prevent their being loſt for ever.

And becauſe your ſpeaking of it ſelf muſt needs be ineffectual, cry vehemently unto the Lord to Second you, and ſpeak with Mighty Power, *Awake, awake, you that ſleep, and ariſe from the dead and live for ever.* And let your Reproofs and Prayers be followed with ſuch an Holy, Harmleſs, Heavenly, Self-denying Converſation, as may tend unto their Conviction. If the Profane, if the Perſecuters, if Carnal Profeſſors had but a good Conſcience, it would be better for the Nation,

Nation, better for the Church, better for particular Believers; and ah, how good would it be for themſelves!

3. Be very ſenſible *that a good Conſcience is matter of the Devils Envy*, therefore it concerns you to be Vigilant, for he will endeavour to wound it. Satan could behold the Rich Man in brave Apparel, and his Table ſumptuouſly Furniſhed, and tumbling in wealth and Pleaſures, and yet he did not Envy him; he knew that theſe things could not make him Happy, and would be ſo far from hindring, that they would rather further his eternal Miſery. But to ſee any with a good Conſcience, vexes and grieves the Devil; which as it ſhews that there is a great Excellency in ſuch a Conſcience above all Earthly good things, ſo it ſhould make you ſtand upon your Guard againſt this Adverſary.

You muſt know, that although Grace cannot be totally loſt, yet a good Conſcience may be both Defiled and Diſturbed. *David*'s ſin polluted him, therefore he prays to *be waſhed throughly from his Iniquity*, and to have his *Heart cleanſed*. His ſin alſo broke his Peace, therefore he Prays for the Light of God's Countenance, *that the Bones which were broken might Rejoyce*, Pſal. 51. If you do not watch and pray, that you may not enter into Temptation, if you are not ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might; if you do not put on the whole Armour of God, that you may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the Devil, upupon a ſudden he may take Advantage, and draw you to ſome, perhaps, groſſer ſins; and this may make you to go in the bitterneſs of your Souls mourning to your Graves. If it had not been for his abominable fall, *David*'s latter part of his Life might have been

ſweeter; and, for ought I know, his Crown in Heaven brighter.

4. Be ſure *with all keeping to keep the good Conſcience.* (*b*) Let not the Apple of the Eye, let not Life it ſelf be preſerved with greater care. Skin for skin, and all that a Man has will he give for his Life. And truly, skin for skin, and all that we have, we ſhould give, rather than make ſhipwrack of a good Conſcience. Oh, never Repent of your Uprightneſs, hold faſt your Integrity, whatever comes on't.

I Read concerning *Brutus*, that ſtout maintainer of his Countries Liberty, when all his Endeavours were to no purpoſe, and the Cauſe which he thought ſo good, had ſuch bad ſucceſs, and he found himſelf vanquiſhed by *Antonius*, he Repented of his Vertue, and cryed out, *O Vertue, I Served thee as a real thing, but thou art onely an empty Name.* (*c*)

But be you more fixed, and better ſettled, and whatever you loſe, keep a good Conſcience. And that you may do thus, follow theſe Directions.

1. *Vigorouſly maintain the Combat againſt Corruption.* Onely ſin can harm the Conſcience, and therefore ſtrive againſt it. *Abſtain from Fleſhly Luſts, for theſe War againſt your Souls,* 1 Pet. 2. 11. Have a

(*b*) *Curandum eſt nobis atque hoc in omni vitâ ſuâ quemque à rectâ conſcientia tranſverſum unguem non oportere diſcedere,* Cicer. *ad* Atticum l. 13. Epiſt. 20.

(*c*) Ὦ τλῆμων ἀρετὴ ὡς σὺ μηδὲν ἄλλο εἶ πλὴν ὄνομα
Te colui Virtus ut rem, aſt tu nomen inane es!

ſpecial

ſpecial Eye to in-dwelling ſin, for that's a worſe Enemy by far than Satan; ſet upon the work of Mortification in good earneſt, hide the Word in your hearts, that it may Antidote you againſt ſin: Derive Vertue from Chriſt Crucified, to Crucifie the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts of it, and call in the aid of the Spirit againſt the deeds of the Body. Conſcience will be kept in greater purity and Peace, the weaker ſin is, and the more it is an underling.

2. *Sit looſe from the World.* If *Galeacius Caraccielus* had loved his Honour and great Eſtate in *Italy*, he would not have kept his Conſcience undefiled from *Rome*'s pollutions. The Apoſtle *Paul*, whoſe Conſcience was good, profeſſes, that he Gloried *in the Croſs of Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the World was Crucified to him, and he unto the World*, Gal. 6. 14. He looked upon the World as a grand Impoſtor: he ſaw no Form nor Comelineſs in it, that he ſhould deſire it; nay, he perceived how ſin had brought a Curſe upon it; no wonder if he ſlighted it. *You cannot Serve God and Mammon.* You muſt caſt the World out of your Affections preſently, and conſent to let it go out of your Poſſeſſion too, when called to part with it, if you would keep a good Conſcience.

3. *Study the Vanity of Men, and be not afraid of them.* The *fear of Man bringeth a Snare*, ſays *Solomon*. Fear of the Papiſts made *Spira* wound his Conſcience, and brought him into a fearful Caſe. *Ceaſe ye therefore from Man, whoſe breath is in his Noſtrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Iſa. 2. *ult.* Be not afraid of the terror of your adverſaries, neither be troubled, but Sanctifie the Lord of Hoſts in your hearts, let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, if you would ſecure your Conſciences.

4. *Pray much to be upheld.* Commit the keeping of your Souls unto God in well doing, for he is Faithful: Beg that he would never leave you, nor forſake you, but keep you by his Mighty Power unto Salvation. It is not in vain to ſeek unto him, for *he is of Power to eſtabliſh you*, Rom. 16. 25. He is able to *keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy*, Jude 24.

5. *Hold faſt Faith, that you may keep a good Conſcience*; firmly believe that Life and Immortality which is brought to light by the Goſpel, and then by patient continuance in well doing you will ſeek for it. The Lord grant unto you the Spirit of wiſdom and Revelation, the eyes of your Underſtanding being enlightned, that you may more thorowly and certainly know what is the hope of your Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of that Inheritance which is above; this will be a ſtrong inducement to keep Conſcience, and heart, and Converſation, and all clean, that you may grow more and more meet for that Inheritance. You ſee the way to keep a good Conſcience, which was the fourth word of Advice.

5. You that have a good Conſcience *be not Acted onely by Conſcience*; but let Love (*d*) conſtrain you alſo to Obedience. 'Tis ſaid of *Titus*, *That he accepted the Exhortation, but was more forward of his own accord*, 2 Cor. 8. 17. Heed your Conſciences telling you of your Duty; but let your hearts be for-

(*b*) *Qui legem dat amantibus,*
Major lex amor eſt ſibi.
Boetius.

ward

ward of their own accord to perform your Duty. The high mettal'd courſer does not ſtand in need of whip or ſpur, looſen the reins, he will run ſwiftly becauſe he does delight in running. Oh let your hearts be enlarged by love to the Lord, and delight in your duty, and then you will run the wayes of his Commands, and ſo running you will at length obtain the prize. Thus have I handled at large the ſecond Doctrine. *To have a good Conſcience ſhould be every ones greateſt care.* This is the point I principally intended to proſecute. I ſhall be very brief in thoſe which do remain.

Doct. 3. The third Doctrine is this, *A good Conſcience will make men ſet themſelves as before God continually. I have lived* ſays the Apoſtle, *in good Conſcience before God.* Hark unto *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 168. *All my wayes are before thee*, and Pſal. 16. 8. *I have the Lord alwayes before me. Job* ſpeaks after the ſame manner, chap. 31. 4. *Doth not God ſee my wayes and count all my ſteps?* And *Elijah* ſpeaking of the Lord of hoſts, adds, *before whom I ſtand*, 1 *King* 18. 15. Theſe men had a great ſenſe of God upon their Spirits, & ſo ſhould we; and a good Conſcience will ſtill be putting us in mind in whoſe preſence we continually are.

In the handling of this Doctrine I ſhall firſt prove, that we are alwaies before God. Secondly, how we are to look upon God when we ſet our ſelves before him. Thirdly, what it is thus to ſet our ſelves before God. Fourthly, why a good Conſcience will make us to do thus. And fifthly, Apply.

In the firſt place I am to prove, *that we are alwaies before God.*

There are ſeveral degrees of the preſence of God, the higheſt degree of all is his preſence with Chriſts humane Nature; a ſecond degree is his preſence with the Angels and triumphant Saints in his Kingdom and Glory, by whom he is ſeen face to face; a third degree is his preſence vouchſafed unto his Saints Militant on Earth, whereby they are quickned, ſtrengthned, and abundantly incouraged. But beſides all this, there is a general preſence of God whereby he fills both Heaven and Earth, ſo that nothing can be hid from him, Jer. 23. 24. *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord? do not I fill Heaven and Earth, ſaith the Lord?*

Three things are here to be remarked.

1. God is ſo every where preſent as that *he perfectly knows what is in us and done by us.* He does poſſeſſe our very Reins, ſearches our very hearts, all the hidden things of darkneſs will one day be brought to light, and the Counſels of mens hearts be made manifeſt, 1 Cor. 4. 5. Though good works are done never ſo ſecretly, God ſees and will reward them openly; though wicked works are done never ſo cloſely, he ſees; and they ſhall be openly puniſhed.

2. God is ſo every where preſent, *as that we are continually under his Power*: the Pſalmiſt tell us, that *his Kingdom ruleth over all*, Pſal. 103. 19. His Eyes run too and fro to ſhew himſelf ſtrong on the behalf of them whoſe hearts are perfect with him. And he is as mighty to beat down and to deſtroy his Enemies, he can make deſtruction to come upon them like a Whirle-

Whirlewind, and though they may promiſe themſelves ſafety, yet they can in no wiſe ſecure themſelves againſt his Almighty hand.

3. God is every way preſent *by his very Eſſence*: oh the incomprehenſible immenſity of his being! *He is not far*, ſays the Apoſtle, *from every one of us*, Act. 17. that is, he is really neer us, *for in him we live, & move, and have our being.* (e) You muſt not imagine that the Eſſence of God is divided, ſo as to be part in Earth and part in Heaven; but after an unconceivable manner, 'tis whole in it ſelf, whole in all things, whole in every thing, 'tis whole within all, whole without all, 'tis not mingled or defiled with any thing, 'tis no where included, no where excluded, nothing does or can contain it, and yet by it all things are contained: ſurely then this *God does compaſſe our paths* wherever we go, and *is acquainted with all our wayes*, Pſal. 139. 3.

In the ſecond place I am to ſhew you, *how we are to look upon God* when we ſet our ſelves before him.

1. We are to look upon God as our *Maker*. 'Twas a complaint made by *Elihu*, *Job* 35. 10. *None ſaith, where is God my Maker?* He is the former of our bodies, and the Father of our Spirits. τῶ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν we are his offspring, and we ſhould be often enquiring

(e) *Nos gentes nationeſque diſtinguimus; Deo una domus eſt mundus hic totus. Reges tantum regni ſui per officia miniſtrorum univerſa novêre: Deo indiciis opus non eſt, non ſolum in oculis ejus ſed & in ſinu vivimus. Cuncta deo plena ſunt.* Minutius Fœlix p. *mihi.* 80.

to what end he made us, which was that we might yeild fear, and service, and love, and praise, to him that gave us our beings; and if we thwart the end of our Creation, and serve our lusts and Satan, who are our Makers Enemies, he may repent of making us, as he did concerning the old World, and then destruction will follow.

2. We are to look upon God *as our Owner*. We are not our own; who can lay claim to us? Satan by right cannot, all that dominion that he has over us, is by usurpation, and our being so sooliſh and wicked as to subject our selves voluntarily to him. But the Lord is by right our owner: to him we are debtors, and owe all that we have and are. We are not just unlesse we yeild our selves to him.

3. We are to look upon God as *our Ruler*. 'Twas a very prophane brag of those, Psal. 12. 4. *Who is Lord over us?* God ought to be acknowledged as our Lord; and if he be not obeyed as such, he will shew himself a Lord by breaking us if we will not bow before him. We should often be asking our selves, whose servants we are? if sins, if Satans; we should propound another question, What wages these are likely to give us? and should we toyl and work hard to make our selves miserable, and bring our selves to Death and Hell?

Onely the Lord has a right to rule us. We should still be enquiring what his will is; and since he is the supream Soveraign of Heaven and Earth, and is so Holy, Righteous, Gracious, his will should never be thwarted by ours; but we should endeavour to do it on Earth as 'tis done by those in Heaven. There is

abundant ſweetneſs at preſent in being not wedded to our own wills, in obeying the Lords will, beſides the future infinite recompence of reward, *He that doth the will of God abideth for ever*, 1 John 2. 17.

4. When we ſet our ſelves before God, we are to look upon him, *as our preſerver*. 'Tis of his Mercy that the Children of men are not conſumed, their provocations are many but he being full of Compaſſion ſpares them. Our ſins have been crying out againſt us all our dayes, and Satan would fain have deſtroyed and devoured us long ago, but *God is Rich in Goodneſs and forbearance*, Rom. 2. 4. The Ox knows his owner, and the Aſſe his Maſter crib, and ſhall we never conſider to whom we are beholding? he is the God of our lives, and the Father of every Mercy which we receive; 'tis both our duty and intereſt to walk worthy of, and ſuitable unto his Care and Kindneſs, eſpecially if we are Believers: for then he is not only the Father of our Mercies, but Our Father likewiſe, (*f*) and being always under our Fathers eye, *we ſhould follow him as dear Children*, Eph. 5. 1.

5. We are to look upon God, as *Him who alone can make us happy*. Sin cannot do it, for it has a quite contrary effect, how many millions has it undone and made miſerable for ever, and daily 'tis undoing more. The World cannot make us happy, for if the world had had power to do this, *Solomon* being exalted to the

(*f*) *Falſa theologia eſt, Deum iratum eſſe agnoſcentibus peccata ſua: talis enim Deus nec in cœlo nec uſquam eſt, ſed eſt idolum perverſi cordis quia verus Deus dicit, Nolo mortem peccatoris.* Luther. Tom. 4. 383. 4.

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top of worldly greatness, and having so much of wealth and Earthly pleasures that he could not desire more; would not in the midst of all have cryed out, *all is vanity and vexation of Spirit, and there is no profit under the Sun*, Eccle. 2. 11.

The Lord can satisfie the Soul of man though other things cannot. He can supply all our needs according to his Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus, *Phil.* 4. 19. he can do more then our Souls can desire or conceive, nay *exceeding abundantly above all that we either ask or think*. Let us be perswaded that if ever we are happy God must make us so, and that he makes us happy no other way but by giving himself, and Communicating his Grace to us in his Son, and this will cause us to cleave unto him.

6. We are to look upon God as *one that is very jealous of us*, lest, we go a whoring after other Lovers, we are really idolaters if we love other things more than God, and Idolatry is Spiritual Adultery; and if Jealousie be the rage of man, how much more is the Lords jealousie to be feared? we should call that Wife impudent with a witness, that should commit lewdness before her Husbands face. Spiritual whoredom is never committed, but God looks on. Oh how daring are the Children of men! Think of Gods jealousie when your hearts are about to depart from him, and to be taken so exceedingly with the things of the world. Hark to the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10. 22. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousie, are we stronger than He?*

7. When we set our selves before God, we are to look upon him *as our Judge*, and he will judge without respect of Persons. He is an all-observing witness at present,

present, who is to be a Judg hereafter. He will bring every person and *every work into Judgement, with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil,* Eccles. 12. ult. If this were seriously thought of 'twould make us fear him and keep his Commandements. Let us set our selves as before our Judge continually, then we shall be diligent that we may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless.

In the third place I am to tell you what 'tis to set our selves before God.

1. Then we indeed set our selves before God when we *are firmly perswaded of his presence,* and are suitably affected. There is no attribute of God that we are lesse able to deny, then his Omnipresence, and yet how rarely are our hearts awed by it. We should watch over our hearts and thoughts, and strive against the vanity, and wickedness, and impertinency of these, as those that are perswaded we are before an Heart-searcher. *Who knows our thoughts afarr off,* Ps. 139. 12.

If there could not a proud, or lustful, or foolish thought arise, but men might discern it; should we not be ashamed, and take more pains to keep our hearts clean? and is not the Lords presence and knowledge more to be regarded then mans? in like manner we should set a watch before the door of our Lips, and ponder the path of our Feet, because *there is not a word in our mouths, but God knows it altogether,* and the *wayes of man are before the Eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings,* Prov. 5. 21.

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2. Then we set our selves before God, *when we hear what he speaks.* Our Lord tells us, *He that is of God, heareth Gods words,* John 8.47. he has an Ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. And that Man after Gods own heart professes, *Psal.* 119. 161. *My Heart standeth in awe of thy Word.* The Lord has a special regard unto them that tremble at his Word, who seriously enquire what his Will and Commands are, and dare not to transgress them: but certainly they do contemn both the Lord and his Presence, who, like those, *Psal.* 50. 17. *Do hate Instruction, and cast his Words behind them.*

3. Then we set our selves before God, *when we Observe how he looks upon us,* whether he frown, or cause his Face to shine. *Jacob* told his VVives, *I see your Fathers Countenance is not towards me as before,* Gen. 31. 5. And they who have a sence of God upon their Spirits, if Gods Countenance be not towards them as before, how are they troubled! VVhen the Lord for a moment did hide his face from *David,* that moment seemed an *Age,* nay, an *Eternity*; therefore he crys out, *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me?* Psal. 13. 1. But when God did manifest himself to him, the Light of his Countenance did put a greater gladness into his heart, than the joy of Harvest. VVe are not to regard what Men say of us, or how they look upon us, but we are to mind Gods approbation or dislike. *He is a Jew that is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God,* Rom. 2. *ult.*

4. Then we set our selves before God, *when we take Notice what he does. David* complains of, and threat-

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ens the ungodly, *Psal.* 28. 4. *Because they regard not the Work of the Lord, nor the Operation of his Hand, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*

We should mind diligently what God does *to us*; that we may comply with his design in all, even the severest of his Dispensations.

What he does *for us*; that his goodness may have an Holy and good effect upon us, and we may Answer his Loving kindness by Gratitude and Obedience.

Finally, what he does *to others before us*; that we may receive *Admonition* by all the Examples that are given us, 1 *Cor.* 10. 11. Others Experience of the Lords faithfulness should make us trust in him; others Experience of the Lords severity should make us cautious of provoking him, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. *Now, these things were our Examples, to the intent we should not Lust after evil things, as they also Lusted.*

5. Then we set our selves before God, *when we live by Faith upon him. David*, when he set the Lord before him, because he saw God at his right hand, concluded, *He should not be moved*, Psal. 16. 8. *The Lord was his Rock, and his Fortress, and his Deliverer; his God, his Strength, in whom he was resolved to trust, his Buckler, and the Horn of his Salvation, and his high Tower*, Psal. 18. 2. He that Lives not by faith forgets God, and his heart draws back from him. But he that sets the Lord before him, and considers his Promises and his power, cannot but look upon him as worthy to be relyed upon: and this is the way to be kept in perfect peace, *Isa.* 26. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

6. Then we set our selves before God, *when we de-*

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sire Fellowship with him. This fellowship is a Riddle to the World, but the Saints find it a most real happiness. We are to set our selves before the Lord, as weak, and indigent, and miserable; and to implore the happiness of his favour in his dear Son, and that he would communicate his Grace for the strengthning of us with strength in our Souls, and the supply of all our wants. Who can indeed look upon God, and not desire to taste and see how Gracious he is? *David* followed hard after him, and crys out, *My Soul thirsteth for God, for the Living God; when shall I come and appear before God? Psal. 42. 2.*

7. Then we set the Lord before us, *when we refer all unto his Glory*; when we aim at this as our great End, that he may be Magnified and Exalted. We wofully forget God when we seek our selves and our own things; when we chiefly design our own praise and Profit. Set him indeed before you, and then his Honour, and the enjoyment of him, will be the great Mark you will aim at; and indeed his Honour and your Happiness are joyned together, that you cannot seek his Honour, but you must also at the same time seek your own Happiness; and you cannot do any thing to his Dishonour, but 'tis also to your selves destructive.

In the fourth place, I am to give you the Reason, why a good Conscience makes Men to set themselves thus before God.

1. Not to set our selves before God, *is exceedingly to Affront him:* If we were in the Presence of an Earthly King, and should take no more Notice of him,

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or not so much Notice of him as of another Man, surely he would ill resent it. God is the King of Glory, and if his Presence is not regarded, we make no more of him than if he were an Idol, which has Eyes, but sees not; Ears, but hears not; and in whose power 'tis not to do either good or evil.

2. Not to set our selves before God, is *to thwart the End that he aims at, both in his Word and Works.* His Works are many and great, that we might stand in awe of the Worker; and in his Word he has told us what a God he is, that we might fear before him.

3. To set our selves before God, is the way *to keep up the Authority of Conscience*; the Word in Consciences Mouth will be more heeded, when our Eyes are open to look upon that Holy and Powerful God, whose Officer Conscience is.

4. To set our selves before God, is *both for our Delight and Advantage*: The Presence of God is terrible indeed to the evil Conscience; but those whose hearts are cleansed, are glad that the Lord is ever with them. With what satisfaction and Triumph did the Church speak those words, *Psal.* 46. 7. 11. *The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of* Jacob *is our Refuge, Selah.* And the profit which we reap from a sence of this Presence, is very great; for when we hear, and pray, and perform other Duties, as in the Lords presence, then they turn to good Account; but when God is not regarded, to be sure, we are not at all Advantaged; nay, our very Duties do but increase our guilt and hardness.

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USE 1. Of Reproof.

1. How are they to be blamed, who instead of setting themselves before God, *Banish the thoughts of him, and Live without him in the World*! This forgetfulness of God is *the Root of presumption* and boldness in sin, when there is no sense or fear of the Lords Eye or Hand, then the hearts of the Sons of Men will be be fully set in them to do evil. This forgetfulness of God *encourages also to Hypocrisie*; and so the whited Sepulchre do but appear beautiful outwardly to the Eyes of Man; the Hypocrite is not concerned at the Eye of God, which sees all that filthiness and rottenness that is within.

2. How are they to be blamed, who instead of having recourse *to God, who is just before them, place their confidence in the Creatures.*

The *Papist* is concerned, who prays to Saints and Angels: 'tis said indeed for his defence, that we speak unto Courtiers to intercede for us to a Prince, and therefore we must speak unto the Saints departed, to Intercede for us to God. But I shall retort this similitude thus. Suppose thou wert just before a King, and he should give thee leave, and command thee to Offer thy Petition to him, would it not be unreasonable then to send to a Courtier that is a Thousand Miles off, to speak a good word for thee? God is just before thee, and has commanded thee to call upon him, and is ready to hear; the Saints in Heaven are a great way off, their Mediation is needless. Blind Papist, open thy eyes, and see God near thee, and thou wilt never pray to Saints and Angels more.

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The *Protestant* also is concerned; for he also places his Confidence in the Creature, when he looks upon his Wealth as his strong City, and his dependance is upon things visible, and not as it ought to be, alone upon the invisible God.

USE II. Of Exhortation. Let Conscience have this Effect upon all of you, to make you set your selves before God.

1. This will make you *to abhor your selves.* (f) Job 42. 5, 6. *Mine Eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self, and Repent in Dust and Ashes.* The view of Gods Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, will make your VVeakness, and Folly, and Defilement, and Guilt to be the more apparent.

2. This will make you *to resist Satan, and to contemn the things of the World, which he Offers to you.* God is ready to give you Power against the Tempter, and all that he Offers is *nothing less than nothing and*

(f) *Quantisper extra terram non respicimus, propriâ justitiâ, sapientiâ, virtute pulchrè contenti, nobis suavissimè blandimur, & tantum non semidei videmur. At si semel cœperimus cogitationem in Deum erigere, & expendere qualis sit, & quàm exacta justitia, sapientia, virtutis ejus perfectio ad cujus amussim conformari nos oportet: quod antea in nobis falso justitiæ prætextu arridebat, pro summâ iniquitate mox fordescet: quod mirificè imponebat sapientiæ titulo, pro extremâ stultitiâ fœtebit: quod virtutis faciem præ se ferebat, miserrima impotentia esse arguetur, adeò divinæ puritati malè respondet quod videtur in nobis vel absolutissimum.* Calvin. *Instit.* l. 1. cap. 1.

Vanity, compared with the All-sufficient God. *David*, when his Eye was cleared, and he saw God, no longer Admired the Prosperity of the wicked, but said, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee*, Psal. 73. 25.

3. This will make you to *have an eye to your Hearts*, because God looks into, and requires these; and to be more Spiritual and Lively in all your Duties, and more generally to please him in all your Actions. When you consider seriously, that *He does beset you behind and before, and does lay his Hand upon you*, Psal. 139. 5. You will be afraid to provoke him, lest that Hand do crush you in the very act of the next Transgression.

4. If you set your selves before God, this will make you *to be the better contented when outward comforts are taken from you*. Outward Comforts may be rejoyced in, but for Gods sake; God is to be rejoyced in for his own sake. And his goodness and fulness being still the same, he is as much to be delighted in when the Creatures are gone, as when they are present. *When the Figg-trees did not blossom, and there was no Fruit in the Vines*; yet the Prophet sayes, *I will Joy in the Lord, and Rejoyce in the God of my Salvation*, Hab. 3. 17, 18.

5. This will make you *Fearless of Men, nay, undaunted in the hour of your Dissolution*: When you are in the Valley of the shadow of Death, you will fear no evil as long as you see that God is with you; and Death will be so far from separating you from his Presence, or from his Love, that 'twill send you nearer to him than ever, and admit you to a fuller enjoyment of

of him, than can be vouchsafed to any under the Sun. Thus of that third Doctrine, *A good Conscience makes men to set themselves before God continually.*

Doct. 4. The Fourth Doctrine is this,

That a good Conscience has a great and lasting influence upon the life and all the Actions.

I have *lived* sayes the Apostle, in *all* good Conscience, and that *unto this day*, so Heb. 13. 18. *We trust we have a good Conscience in all things willing to live honestly.* Such a Conscience is well instructed in that lesson, Tit. 2. 11. 12. *For the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and Righteously, and Godly in this present world.*

In the handling of this Doctrine, I shall first shew how a good Conscience is concerned in the Life and Conversation. Secondly, Instance in several kinds of Actions, that a good Conscience has an influence upon. Lastly, Conclude with the Application.

In the first place I am to shew how a good Conscience is concerned in the Life and Conversation. This will appear in these following particulars:

1. There is *no action but Conscience is to examine.* Every action is a step one way or other, and Conscience is to see which way every step has a tendency, whether upward towards the Hill of the Lord, or downward towards the lake of Fire.

There is no action but Conſcience will be wounded with it, if it be a work of darkneſs, and Conſcience may reap ſatisfaction from it, if it be a work of Righteouſneſs.

2. Conſcience if good, *will not admit of looſe principles.*

It will not argue licentiouſly from the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which alone is imputed to us for our juſtification, that therefore there is no neceſſity of inherent Holyneſs.

It will not argue from the ſuperabundant Grace of God that therefore we may ſafely continue in ſin, Rom. 6. 15, 16. *What then, ſhall we ſin becauſe we are not under the Law but under Grace? God forbid, Know ye not that to whom ye yeild your ſelves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom you obey, whether of ſin unto Death, or obedience unto Righteouſneſs?*

A good Conſcience will not argue from the falls of Saints recorded in Scripture, that we may venture to fall as they did; but contrarily concludes ſince ſuch eminent Saints have fallen, it does concern us to look to our ſtanding, and not to be high minded but fear.

Finally, it does not argue becauſe Gods Covenant is Everlaſting, and his love unchangeable, that therefore we may live as we liſt; but on the contrary it tells us that becauſe the Lords love is ſo great and unchangeable, he is to be loved the more by us, and followed more fully, and more willingly obeyed.

3. Conſcience if good, *will not abuſe Chriſtian liberty.*

The nature of this is not to be miſtaken, 'tis not a liberty to make proviſion for the Fleſh, nor to walk after the

the courſe of the World, nor to miſpend your precious time, nor to omit, or do the work of the Lord negligently. They that take ſuch a liberty take that which God never gave them, and by this liberty they become ſlaves and vaſſals to the Devil who employes and leads them captive at his pleaſure.

But Chriſtian liberty lies in being free from the bondage of Corruption, from the Curſe of the Law, and the Power of Darkneſs, and in having freedom of acceſſe to God through Chriſt, and in being enlarged by the Spirit to run the wayes of his Commandements.

Chriſtian liberty is an holy thing. A good Conſcience therefore is the more watchful, leſt we go beyond the bounds of Chriſtian liberty, and venture upon what is unlawful, or uſe lawful things unlawfully; for ſo 'tis poſſible, nay uſual, *licitis perire* even in theſe things to periſh. *To Eat, to Drink, to Buy to Sell, to Plant, to Build, to Marry and to be given in Marriage*, were none of them in themſelves unlawful, yet when the old world, and *Sodom* were thus employed, and theſe things were only minded, and ſpiritual things neglected, a Flood came and ſwept away the one; and Fire and Brimſtone did deſtroy the other, Luk. 17. 26, 27, 28, 29.

4. A good Conſcience looks well *to the Principles of our Obedience.*

That it ſprings from a renewed nature, for unleſs we are made good Trees, how can we bring forth good Fruit? that it proceeds from Faith, for by Faith we muſt believe what we do to be according to the will of God, and by Faith we muſt deſire ſtrength from our Lord Jeſus to do that will which is diſcovered to us.

Our Obedience also must flow from love, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. *The love of Christ constraineth us to love, not unto our selves but unto him that died for us.* Love is the first and great Command, and that which makes us to yeild obedience to all the rest.

And we must be acted by Fear as well as Love, a childlike reverence and awe of God, how circumspectly will it make us walk! *Job feared God and eschewed evil.*

Finally, our Obedience must spring from gratitude, and a sense of our obligation to serve the Lord who hath so loaded us with innumerable benefits. All the mercies and deliverances which God did work for, and extend to *Israel* were to induce them *to observe his Statutes and to keep his Laws.* Psal. 105. 45.

5. A good Conscience has a *regard unto the matter of our actions.* That this be agreeable unto the Word of God. This word is the rule we are to walk by; that peace and mercy may be upon us.

There is a word which God will do, his word of Promise he will accomplish, his word of Threatning he will execute; and his word of Prophecy he will fulfill.

There is a word which he will have us to do, and thats the word of Precept. A good Conscience respects the precepts of the Law, the sum of which is *to Love the Lord with all our Heart, and Soul, and Mind, and Strength, and our Neighbour as our Selves, Mat.* 22. 37. 39. This Law is not made void but established by Faith, even in the Covenant of Grace the Lord promises to write this Law in our Hearts, and sayes he will put his spirit within us, to cause us to walk in his Statutes, and to observe his Judgements, and do them.

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The Gospel has precepts also as well as the Law, which a good Conscience knowes are to be obeyed. And if we will indeed obey the Gospel, we must believe on Jesus, we must repent from dead works, we must live by Faith, we must give all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure, we must love our Brethren as love is a new command, and enjoyned upon a new motive, namely the great love of Christ. We must engage in all the Ordinances and Institutions of our Lord Jesus; finally, we must hold fast our profession without wavering whatever troubles upon that score do overtake us.

6. A good Conscience *Eyes the Manner of our Obedience*, That it be out of choice. *David* did *chuse the way of the Lords Precepts*, he considered these precepts, esteemed them concerning all things to be right, and preferred them before all the False and destructive wayes of sin.

Obedience must not only be out of choice, but it must be universal in regard of the *object*, all the commands be respected, and in regard of the *Subject*, the whole man must be under obedience; and as this obedience must be yeilded to God without delay, so we must be sure to stick unto his testimonies and persevere unto the end. *If ye continue in my word* (says Christ) *then are ye my Disciples indeed*, John 8. 31.

But after we have done our best and most, we must humbly and believingly look unto Jesus, for the covering of our imperfections, and that we and our performances may be accepted.

7. A good Conscience looks *to the End of our obedience*, and that the design of our actions be as it ought. And our end should be not onely the obtaining of a re-

ward, but the Glory of God, John 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much Fruit, so shall ye be my Disciples*, we should aim also at the credit and adorning of the Gospel, and the good of men. Good living is for the benefit of others in more regards than one. Men are benefited by our good works of Justice and Mercy, and such like, and our doing of these works may help to convince them that there is an excellency and efficacy in the Gospel, which brings forth Fruits that be so excellent. You see how a good Conscience is concerned in the Conversation.

In the second place, I am to instance in several kinds of actions which a good Conscience has an influence upon.

1. A good Conscience has an influence *upon our holy duties.*

It is not satisfied unless we begin the day with these; God should have our first thoughts, and our affections and praises should be our morning sacrifice. *In the morning we should direct our prayer unto him, and look up*, Ps. 5. 1, 2, 3. The Scriptures are to be searched that our Hearts may be instructed, quickened, purified, strengthned, and revived by this word of Grace.

A good Conscience will not suffer holy duties to be done negligently; it knows how treacherous the heart is, and therefore watches over it that it may engage in the Lords service, and not start aside like a deceitful bow.

(*f*) Conscience will not be put off with words, that are good or with a bended knee, or a lifted up Eye, or a sigh now and then, but looks that Holy desires be strong and stirring, that Faith be acted upon the promises of God, who is so ready *to be found of them that seek him with their whole Heart.* Deut. 4. 29.

A good Conscience looks upon holy duties as things of grand concernment, if these are well done it will be well with us, if ill done, it will be ill with us for ever. In your Trades you are getting a livelihood, but in your duties you are or should be minding a better and enduring substance. What does deserve your pains and time, and serious endeavours, if the favour of God, and the fulness of Christ, and an Heavenly Kingdom do not? what manner of duties should ours be, since we aim at such things in the doing of them?

2. A good Conscience has an influence *upon the works of our Callings.*

It will not allow of an unlawful Calling; and that is to be styled an unlawful Calling, in which a livelihood is gotten by serving and gratifying the lusts of men. The Harlots way is unlawful, and Stage-players is little better. 'Tis a wicked thing to live by the sins of others, and by helping to undo and ruine them for ever.

(*f*) *Non venitur ad bonam conscientiam nisi per cordis custodiam, Cor ad vitam se vertit aut ad mortem; velle peccare malum, peccare pejus, in peccato perseverare pessimum; nolle pœnitere, mortale.* Bernard. *de Interior. dom.* cap. 24.

And as the Calling must be Lawful, so it must be Lawfully managed. A good Conscience will take care that there be not an over eagerness after wealth, which is of a perishing Nature; for *the time is short*, and therefore *they that Buy, must be as though they possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing of it, for the Fashion of this World passeth away*, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31.

And as for unjust and dishonest gain, a good Conscience can by no means allow it. *Do Justly*, is a Law so deeply engraven in the heart of Men by Nature, and so often required in the Scripture, that where injustice is, we may conclude there is no goodness or tenderness in the Conscience. (f) When this is indeed awakened, though other sins do flie in the sinners face, yet if any thing has been gotten wrongfully, this in a special manner is a burthen, neither is there any rest till Restitution be made, either to the Person wronged, or if he cannot be found, unto the poor. That Scripture should ever be Ringing in our ears, in all Trading and Business, 1 *Thes.* 4. 6. *That no Man go beyond or defraud his Brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such.*

And not onely Injustice, but Idleness in the Calling is to be shunned: for this Idleness is the way to cloath a Man with Rags, and exposes to innumerable temptations. (g)

(f) *Bona conscientia est, si habet in corde puritatem, in ore veritatem; in actione rectitudinem.* Bernard. *De Conscien.* cap. 4. pag. *mihi* 1099.

(g) *'Tis a good answer to the tempter.* Non licet, non vacat, *'Tis not lawfull, neither am I at leisure to do what thou would'st have me.*

3. A good Conscience has an Influence *upon our Words and Discourses*: for a great part of *Pure and Undefiled Religion does lie in brideling of the Tongue*, James 1. 26. Our Communication should be such as may administer Grace unto the Hearers.

A good Conscience will not admit of *Impiety* in our Discourse, and certainly Oaths and Curses are very impious. Lesser Oaths are not to be sworn, but greater; as by the God of Heaven, the Blood and wounds of the Lord Jesus, argue sinners to be daring; and how fearful is it to hear them calling upon God to damn them? Such things Argue that there is no good Conscience.

Neither will this admit of *Impurity* in our Communication; for *filthy and foolish talking* is condemned, *Eph.* 5. and is a sign of a corrupt and unrenewed heart, out of the abundance of which the mouth speaketh.

Finally, a good Conscience will not suffer us to be *Injurious* to any in our Discourses; by Defaming, by Back-biting, by Slandering of them. Those that take up Reproaches against their Neighbours, and spread them; their own mouths condemn them, and plainly prove that they are not Citizens of *Zion*, *Psal.* 15. 1, 2, 3.

4. A good Conscience has an Influence *upon our Time, that it may be well and wisely Husbanded*: This is more precious than Gold that perishes, and if the Goldsmith does look upon all gold as worth saving, surely every moment of Time is worth Redeeming.

That which makes other things of less value, namely, the shortness of their continuance, makes Time of greater valne: 'Tis the more to be prized, because 'twill so quickly be at an end. A good Conscience will make us *pass the time of our Sojourning here in fear*, 1 Pet. 1. 17. It will not allow any time to sin (though indeed sin

sin will be apt to steal time away.) It will not allow the World to ingrosse all our time, but 'twill be Liberal of time, that the Soul and Eternity may be provided for.

3. A good Conscience has an influence *upon our Natural Actions*; as Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, *&c.* It takes care that there be not excess in these: If we Eat to Gluttony, and Drink to Drunkenness, we are rather Beasts than Men, and surely far from being Saints: And if we sleep too much, we seem to lie buried all that while, and while too much in our Beds, we are but unprofitable Burthens of the Earth.

And as Excesse in these Actions is avoided by a good Conscience, so the glory of God is the End unto which they are Directed, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the Glory of God.*

6. A good Conscience has an Influence upon *your Recreations.* You must not, says Conscience, be Prodigal of your Estates, nor of your time in these: You must not needlesly torment, and be cruel to the Creatures which groan sufficiently already under the sin of Man; you must take heed of Passion in your Recreations. A good Conscience will put us in mind that we must Recreate our selves, that we may be more fit for business; if therefore Recreations justle out Duty, or indispose us to it, the End of them is not obtained.

I might also add, that a good Conscience will take Notice of our garb; and if you will but hearken to it, it will tell you plainly, *That Men and Women Professing Godliness, should not go in such kind of gay Attire,*

as the Rogues and Ranters, and Whores of the Town wear.

7. A good Conscience will have an Influence upon *your Carriage in your Relations.* All Relations call for Duty, and unless we do our Duty, and are good in our Relations, we cannot be said to be good in reality.

The great Fundamental Relation is between Man and Wife. A good Conscience therefore will take care that these Yoke-fellows come together in an Holy manner; it will not allow of Incest, or Marrying within forbidden degrees; no force must be used, nor marrying contrary to the consent of Parents, nor must a Believer be unequally Yoaked with one that's none, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. For if the Family at first be not piously erected, God may be so much provoked, that it may Labour and Travel under the Burthen of his Anger ever after.

A good Conscience will make the Husband, Loving, Careful, Tender of his Wives Person, and especially of her Soul. A good Conscience will make the Wife Affectionate, Faithful, to Reverence her Husband, and to be Subject to him in every thing. A good Conscience will make Parents to bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; and 'twill make Children to Honour, and to Obey their Parents, and to be a support, and a Comfort to them. A good Conscience will make Masters to give unto their Servants that which is Just and Equal, considering they have a Master in Heaven, with whom there is no respect of Persons: and 'twill make Servants with good will to do Service as unto the Lord, and not unto Men; it will stop their mouths when about to Answer again, it will make them diligent, and to shew all good Fidelity, that

that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

8. A good Conscience has an Influence upon *your Behaviour, both in Prosperity and Adversity.*

In *Prosperity* 'twill make you take heed *of forgetting God*, Idolizing the Gifts, and lightly esteeming the Giver: 'twill make you take heed of *being high minded, and trusting in uncertain Riches:* You have little Reason to be puft up because you have more thick Clay than others, and to look upon them therefore with scorn and contempt; you should contemn your own Riches, but not your poor Brother, who may, perhaps, be much Richer towards God than you. These Riches, because uncertain, are not to be trusted in: 'tis easier for a Camel to enter into the Eye of a Needle, than for them who *trust in Riches*, to enter into the Kingdom of God.

In *Adversity* a good Conscience will make you to beware of Impatience under the Rod, Incorrigibleness by it, and of Inconstancy and drawing back from God after the Rod is taken off from you.

9. A good Conscience will have an Influence upon you, *in reference to your Company*. It will make you to shun *Erroneous* Company, lest you be led away with their Errors, and embrace divers and strange Doctrines: and to flee from Profane Society, for if these are not avoided, you will never keep the Commands of God to any purpose; and if you love them, and will not leave them, you are likely to go to Hell for Company along with them.

10. A good Conscience will make you *Useful in your Generations*: 'twill make you Merciful to the Bodies

Bodies of others, giving them what *is needful*, to your Power, and not barely saying, *Depart in Peace, be ye Warmed and Filled*, James 2. And not onely Merciful to the Bodies, but especially to the Souls of others: and how much good may you do to Souls by being Publick Spirited, much in Prayer for them, giving Counsel and Reproof to them, and being exemplary in all Holy conversation and godliness before their Eyes!

11. A good Conscience will make you *daily to walk with God*, and *to die daily*: that day that you do not walk with God, but neglect him and his Service, and venture to sin against him, you have Reason to cry out with that *Roman* Emperour, *Diem perdidi*, I have lost a day. You should every day also consider your latter end, Live as Strangers and Pilgrims. (*b*) A good Conscience by putting you in mind of Death and Judgment which will follow after Death, will make you to walk every day with an Holy Circumspection, and to be diligent, that you may be found of God in Peace, and that your latter end may be Peace.

I come now to the Application.

(*b*) *Quid in mundo stabile? quid firmum? Quale istud bonum quod semper timeas amittere? quod vel auferendum abs te meum, vel à te relinquendum scias? Quis illius voluptatis fructus qui statim ut cessaverit videbitur tibi non fuisse? Age jam tu anfractum vitæ tuæ tempus animo revolve, Nonne tibi umbra videatur, & instar somnii tenuis, &c. Quod si hæc possumus hic dicere ubi quamvis brevis, tamen quia præsens est vita ista magni penditur, Quid in futuro dicturi sumus, ubi majori ætatis scientiâ transactum omne pro nihilo est?* Augustin. *Epist.* 142.

USE 1. Of

USE I. Of Information. If a good Conscience has such an Influence upon the Life and Conversation, then Learn, *if the Conversation be bad, Conscience must needs be bad also.* If wickedness be Ordinarily practised in the Life, 'tis a sign either that Conscience is stupid, and takes little notice of what is done; or if it does observe, yet 'tis without power to restrain and hinder it.

2. Learn what an *Happiness 'tis to a Nation, to have much of a Good Conscience among them.* This will hinder Warres, and Fightings, and Confusion: this will hinder Injustice, and Oppression, and Uncleanness: This would cause Unity and Peace, turning our Swords into Plough-shares, and our Spears into Pruning-hooks, and prevent our hurting and destroying one another any more; *Isa.* 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. Those are Enemies to the common Good, who endeavour to debauch the Consciences of men; for they go the ready way to fill the places where they live with all Impiety and Unrighteousness.

USE II. Of *Advice*, which shall be in the words of the Psalmist: Shew that you have indeed a good Conscience, *by departing from Evil, and by doing Good*, *Psal.* 37. 27.

1. *Depart from Evil.* There cannot possibly be a greater Evil than Sin; this is the procuring Cause of all other evils: there had never been any such thing as Sickness, Pain, Death, Hell, if Sin had never been. Sin does *alienate* from God, *Col.* 1. 21. 'Tis a most base Employment, we cannot be engaged in fouler and filthier

filthier work, than in working of Iniquity; and is there any good that comes of it? No, no, the works of Darkneſs are Unfruitfull. *Rom.* 6. 21. *What fruit had ye then in thoſe works whereof ye are now aſhamed?* All will repent of theſe evil works ſooner or later; the ſooner the better: for to repent in Hell will be too late.

Mind therefore your Conſciences bidding you ceaſe to do Evil, elſe Evil will be extremely aggravated: But if Evil be forſaken, the great Bar to Mercy is removed, and God is ready to pardon and be at peace with you, *Iſa.* 55. 7.

2. *Learn to do well.* Conſcience will be pleaſed if God be pleaſed; God is a Gracious Lord, compare Him and Sin together, Him and Satan together. His Commands are not grievous, he is ready to help you to do whatever he requires, and to work all your works in you and for you, *Iſa.* 26. 12. Your work, if truely good, will be wages, becauſe of that Peace and Joy at preſent to be found in the way of Righteouſneſs: for by good works it appears that Faith is of the right kind; is the Faith of Gods Elect.

Finally you muſt be judged according to your VVorks. *Rev.* 22. 12. *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work ſhall be.* As you would ſtand at that day, up and be doing the work of the Lord now. I have done with that fourth Doctrine; *A good Conſcience has a great and laſting Influence upon the Life, and all the Actions.*

Doct. 5. The fifth Doctrine is this: *A good Conſcience ſteels a mans Heart with courage, and makes*

him fearleſs before his Enemies. Paul *earneſtly beheld the Councel*: He was not afraid to face them, becauſe his Conſcience was clear. Nay, we read that *Fœlix* the *Judge trembled*, while *Paul* the Priſoner was *confident*: the reaſon was, becauſe the Judge had a bad Conſcience, which flew in his face when *he heard of Righteouſneſs, Temperance and Judgement to come*, Act. 24. 25. but the Priſoner being acquitted by a good Conſcience, did not tremble but rejoyce at the thoughts of Judgement to come. When *Bradford* was brought before the Chancellour, he thought to brow-beat him, but could not; *Bradford* look'd him ſtedfaſtly in the Face, and out-look'd him, and then look'd up to Heaven: I do not wonder that he did not fear the the Look of a Popiſh Biſhop, who was not afraid (as it appeared afterwards) of a fiery Faggot.

Now the grounds why thoſe that have a good Conſcience are Fearleſs, be theſe:

1. *The Strength of God who is engaged for them, is everlaſting.* Iſa. 26. 4. *In the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.*

2. As his Strength, ſo *his Covenant and Kindneſs are alſo everlaſting.* Iſa. 54. 10. *For the Mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, nor the Covenant of my Peace be removed, ſaith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee.* Nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate Believers from the *Love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, Rom. 8. *ult.*

3. Let the *weakneſs of Enemies* be conſidered. Why ſhould he that has a good Conſcience be afraid of

of a Man that ſhall die, and of the Son of man that ſhall be made as Graſs?

4. As Enemies are weak, ſo they are *limited*; they are abſolutely under Gods Power, they are as a ſtaffe in his hand, and cannot move or ſtrike but as he pleaſes. *Let not the Axe boaſt it ſelf againſt him that heweth therewith:* Iſa. 10. 15. Why ſhould a good Conſcience be afraid of the Axe, ſince the Lord (in whoſe hand the Axe is,) is ſo ſure and great a Friend?

5. There is an excellent Promiſe, That what Men do *mean for Evil*, ſhall *turn to Good*: Nay, *all all things ſhall work together for good to them that love God* Rom. 8. 28. God does admirably overrule the Sins of men, and does make theſe ſubſervient to his own Glory and the Good of his people. (*i*) The Selling of *Joſeph* was the Preſervation of *Iſrael*; the Perſecuting of the Chriſtians the Enlargement of the Church; the Killing and Death of Chriſt the Redemption and Salvation of Mankind.

USE I. Of Encouragement to the Saints; the Lord takes care to ſecure them from Fear as well as Harm. His Spirit dwells in them to comfort them, and Conſcience is commanded to ſpeak Peace unto the Sons of Peace in the Lords Name. (*k*)

(*i*) *Bonum eſt ut mala ſint aliter non ſineret Deus ut mala eſſent, non ſinit autem nolens utique ſed volens.* Auguſtin.

(*k*) *Injuſtè torqueris? quid nunc diceres ſi juſte? nullum nempe tormentum conſcientia majus eſt illâ incolumi externâ hæc deſpicito: intra te eſt conſolatur tuus. Quoſdam carcer ad inſignem gloriam, alios ad eximiam fortunam, multos ad cœlum miſit, ad ſepulchrum omnes: nullum cepit quem non redderet.* Petrarch.

USE II. Of Caution. *Take heed of wounding Conſcience*, for that will make you exceeding timerous. If you comply a little in a ſinfull way, and uſe any unlawfull Means for ſecuring of your ſelves, this will ſpoyl your Peace and your Confidence, and you muſt expect greater ſtraits to make you ſee the folly of the Courſe you have taken. And 'twill be very ſad to have a Storm without, and a Tempeſt within at the ſame time.

USE III. Of Terrour to Believers Adverſaries; There is very good reaſon why Fear ſhould ſeize upon them: they are engaged in bad work, they have a bad Conſcience, and their End if they go on in this way they are in, will be a bad End. God made known his Power and got himſelf a Name in the deſtruction of *Pharaoh*, who was a bitter Enemy unto *Iſrael*.

Doct. 6. *Thoſe that are truely Conſcientious love their Enemies, and wiſh them no worſe than if they were their Brethren.* This is the ſixth and laſt Doctrine. *Paul* ſaid, *Men and Brethren.* The Reaſons of this Doctrine are theſe.

1. The Command is expreſs and plain, *to love Enemies.* Mat. 5.44. *But I ſay to you, love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you.*

2. Thoſe who now have a good Conſcience, *were once Enemies, and yet they were loved*; though now the

the Children of God, yet there was a time *that they were the Children of wrath even as others*, Eph. 2. 3. *Though now they have obtained Mercy, yet there was a time wherein they had not obtained mercy.* They ſhould compaſſionate Enemies, ſince Divine Compaſſion was ſhewed to them even when they were Enemies.

3. *Enemies may be converted, and become Friends to God and to his People. Stephen* had a Love to his Enemies when Stoning him to death, and prayes for them: his Prayer was heard, and *Saul* that was conſenting to his death, was afterwards converted, and became an Apoſtle, and laboured more abundantly than all the Apoſtles, to ſpread the Goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus.

4. When Enemies are loved, there is *great Peace and Sweetneſs in ſuch a temper*: this is a great Evidence of Sincerity, and the Heart is emptied of that Malice, Envy, Revenge, which are greatly torturing as well as very ſinfull.

5. To Love Enemies, makes us *very like unto our Heavenly Father*, for he is *kind unto the unthankfull and to the evil*; he *makes his Sun to ſhine upon the evil and upon the good, and ſends Rain upon the juſt and upon the unjuſt*, Mat. 5. 45.

The Uſe that I ſhall make of this Doctrine, ſhall be in theſe three particulars.

1. If the Conſcientious love their *Enemies*, ſurely they will much more love their *Brethren*. How much is Love called for in the Goſpel! what Motives

are uſed to perſwade to it! 'Tis the Mark upon the Sheep of Chriſt, that they *love one another*; and *He that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him*, 1 *Joh.* 4. 16.

2. Becauſe *ſo little love*, we may conclude *there is but little Conſcience.* (†) Love is grown cold, and therefore ſurely Iniquity does abound, and Conſcience is grown dead.

3. To revive Conſcience is *the way to Unity and Peace.* 'Tis ſad to ſee the Members of Chriſt at variance among themſelves. While one cryes out, *I am of Paul*, and another *I of Apollo*, and another *I of Cephas*; 'tis a ſign *they are all carnal, and walk as men*, 1 Cor. 3. 3, 4. 'tis a ſign there is little of Conſcience.

Conſcience if good, is an Enemy to Striſe and Diviſion; 'tis againſt perverſe Diſputing, and that Pride and Paſſion and Selfiſhneſs with which thoſe Diſputes are managed. A good Conſcience charges them in whom it is, as they will approve themſelves Subjects of the Prince of Peace, and Children of the God of Peace, and make it evident that they underſtand the Goſpel of Peace; that they take care *to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, Eph. 4. 3.

(†) *Pigri mortui, miſeri eritis ſi nihil ametis; Amate ſed quid amatis indete. Amor Dei amor proximi Charitas dicitur, amor mundi, amor hujus ſæculi. Cupiditas dicitur cupiditas refrænetur; charitas excitetur, charitas bene operantis dat ei ſpem bonæ conſcientiæ.* Auguſtin. Tom. 8. *Enarrat. in Pſal.* 31. pag. *mihi* 188. & 186.

The

The Concluſion.

THus have I finiſhed all the Doctrines which I raiſed from the words of my Text. I hope I have not been all this while beating the Air, or Plowing upon a Rock, and loſing my Labour. My Hearts deſire and Prayer to God for this whole Congregation, is, that they may be Awakened, Converted, Built up, and Saved! I have ſpoken many words to you.

Now I ſhall addreſs my ſelf unto *Conſcience* within you, and deſire it to ſpeak all my words over again. Satan be dumb and tempt no more! Or if he will not be dumb, be you deaf to his Temptations. Be ſilent, O thou Fleſh, and perſwade no more unto that which is unto the Souls Ruine! But let Conſcience be heard in what it ſpeaks in the Name, and from the Word of God.

O Conſcience, rouze up thy ſelf, underſtand thy Power, know thy Office, lift up thy Voyce, and do thy Duty. Tell this Congregation thou haſt ſomething to ſay to every Mothers Child of them, and command them to hear thee, or elſe threaten to Reproach them in Hell for ever for their refuſing to hearken.

1. Then ſpeak unto the *Ignorant*. Cauſe a dread-

ful sound in their Ears, (*l*) Tell them that their danger is greater, because they do not apprehend their danger; and that if they are Ignorant of God and Christ, they have none of that *Knowledge, which is Life Eternal*, John 17. 3. Say, *How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity! and Fools hate Wisdom! Turn you at my Reproof*; and use the means to obtain Understanding, and especially ask it of God, *that he may pour out his Spirit unto you, and make known his Words unto you*, Prov. 1. 22, 23.

Tell the Ignorant that the Devil is the Ruler of the darkness of this World, and therefore those that are in darkness are under the Devils power; bid them look unto Christ Jesus for Light, and for Redemption, that they may be rescued out of Satans hand, and made free indeed.

2. Speak, O Conscience, to the *Profane*, tell them that 'tis not more certain that God is Holy than that he is their Enemy; they Declare themselves open Rebels against the great and glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth: And he has threatned *to break such with a Rod of Iron, and to dash them in pieces like a Potters Vessel*, Psal. 2. 9. Tell the Notorious Drunkards and Swearers, and Whore-mongers, and Sabbath-breakers, that their sins at last will find them out, that wickedness will be found, and felt to burn as the fire, and that

(*l*) *Hic consentiamus mala facinora conscientia flagellari; multos fortuna liberat pœnâ, metu neminem; quia infixa nobis ejus rei aversatio est quam natura damnavit; ideo nunquam fides latendi fit etiam latentibus; quia coarguit illos conscientia & ipsos sibi ostendit.* Seneca. *Epist.* 97.

God

God must needs be infinitely too hard for all that harden themselves against him.

Oh, call unto these Frantick, self-destroying sinners to stop presently, lest the very next step be into the bottomless Pit of woe, out of which there can be no Recovery. Roar in the Ears of those Ranting, Roaring Fellows, and let them not Eat, or Drink, or Sleep, much less sin in quiet, for thee; tell them that there is but an hairs breadth between them and Death, between them and Hell; and inform them that 'tis possible, even for the most Profane to be saved, if they come and submit to the Lord Jesus, and break off their sins by Righteousness.

3. O Conscience, speak unto the *Civilized sinners that trust in their own Righteousness.* Tell them that the Prophet counted *his Righteousnesses as filthy Rags*, Isa. 64. 6. And ask them how they dare to trust in theirs? Convince them, that 'tis not enough to escape the more scandalous wickedness, for the *Pharisee was not an Extortioner, nor Unjust, nor an Adulterer, he Fasted and Prayed, and gave Tithes of all that he Possessed*, and yet all this could not Justifie him.

Tell them that they are not so whole, but they need Christ the Physitian, and must needs die without him as well as others: Tell them that their very Hearts must be renewed, and taken off from sin and the Creature, and turned unto God, else they must of Necessity perish.

4. Speak, O Conscience, unto *Hypocritical Professors*, tell them that that which is highly esteemed among Men is abomination many times in the sight of God: Say

Say to them in the words of the Apoſtle, and be ſure to ſpeak home, *Gal.* 6. 7, 8. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatſoever a Man Soweth, that ſhall be alſo Reap: He that ſoweth unto the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh Reap Corruption.*

Tell them that their Secret ſins, their ſecret Intemperance, and Uncleanneſs, and Diſhoneſt dealing is ſet in the Light of Gods Countenance, and though they may ſhut their own Eyes, and not ſee God, yet they cannot ſhut Gods Eyes, nor hinder him from ſeeing them: Tell them that Hypocriſie is moſt hateful, and that as Hell is prepared for the Devil and his Angels, ſo in a ſpecial manner for the Hypocrite and the Unbeliever.

5. O Conſcience, ſpeak unto *the Rich in this world*, and tell them how hard 'tis for them to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and as long as they love the World, and deſire it more than Communion with God, 'tis utterly impoſſible.

Bid them to think of the Rich Man in the Goſpel, that went from a great Eſtate, and from a full Table, and a brave Houſe, and ſumptuous Fare, unto a place of Torment: Put them in mind that the Love of Money is the root of all evil, and that wealth has proved unto Millions, onely like a weight to ſink them into Deſtruction and perdition. Bid them mind a Treaſure in Heaven, which is infinitely better than Gold and Silver which are Corruptible.

6. Speak

6. Speak, O Conſcience, *to the Poor*, and tell them 'twill be ſad for them to be miſerable in both Worlds; 'twill be ſad to receive evil things here, and ten thouſand times worſe hereafter. Bid them take heed of Lying and Stealing, and truſting in any ſinful courſe for a Livelihood, but perſwade them to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, that all other things which are needful may be added to them, *Mat.* 6. 33.

Charge them to be Poor in Spirit, to be contented with their Condition without murmuring againſt God, or envying at thoſe who have more than themſelves; and above all things to endeovour that they may be rich towards God; *Rich in Faith, and then they will be Heirs of the Kingdom, which the Lord has promiſed to them that Love him*, James 2. 5.

7. O Conſcience, ſpeak unto *Traders of all ſorts*, tell them, that falſe Weights, and Meaſures, and Balances are an abomination in the ſight of God. When they are about to Cheat, give them a check, and aſſure them that an Eſtate gotten by fraud is attended with a Curſe.

Be with them in their Shops, and at the Exchange, obſerve how they Buy and Sell, and examine all their gains; bid them to mete the ſame meaſure unto others, that they would have mete unto themſelves; and *to do as they would be done unto*, Mat. 7. 12.

Tell them that 'tis the height of Madneſs to venture the loſing of their Souls for a pound, or for a ſhilling, or for Six-pence unjuſtly gained, ſince Chriſt, who knew the value of Souls, ſays, that a Soul is more worth than the World, and all the Wealth of it put together.

8. Speak,

8. Speak, O Conscience, unto *Back-sliders*, tell them that *it had been better for them never to have known the way of Truth and Righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered to them*, 2 Pet. 2, 21.

Call them Dogs for returning to their Vomit, and Swine, for wallowing again in their former Mire. Tell them that where there was but one unclean Spirit before, they are likely to be possessed with seven now; and the latter end will be worse with them than the beginning.

9. O Conscience, speak unto them *that are truly humbled for sin, and are willing to have Christ upon any terms*, and tell them that God is rich in Mercy, ready to forgive freely the Debt of many thousand Talents.

These are the Sons of Peace, and therefore let thy Peace, and thy Lords Peace come and abide upon them. (*m*) Those that mourn for their Iniquities, and hate every false way, and are desirous to be washed and Sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, as well as Justified and reconciled by his Blood: oh, be sure to comfort them, tell them *that the Lord will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoaking Flax, until he send forth Judgment unto Victory*, Mat. 12. 20. Bid them not to be cast down, not to be disquieted, but to hope in the Lord, and praise him, who is so nigh to

(m) *Futuræ beatudinis non est certius testimonium quam bona conscientia; mundus enim volubilitate circumvolvetur, floret, rides pereat, transeat; nunquam conscientia merceßit.* Bernard. lib. de Consc. c. 4.

them

them that are of broken Heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite Spirit.

10. Laſtly, O Conſcience, ſpeak one word *to the Preacher himſelf*; and ſpeak effectually. Thou that Teacheſt others, be ſure to Teach and Learn thy ſelf. Practice not the ſins thou cryeſt out againſt, neglect not the Duties thou urgeſt others to perform. Be not like thoſe who dig in Mines, and enrich others, but are poor themſelves; Or like that Statue in *Greece*, which ſhewed the way to *Thebes* and *Athens*, but it ſelf ſtirred not. Oh, take heed, leſt after thou haſt Preached Chriſt and Conſcience unto others, thou thy ſelf be found a caſt-away.

FINIS.

A Poem out of Mr. George Herbert, Called Longing, pag. 142, 143, 144, 145.

With ſick and Famiſht Eyes,
With doubling Knees and weary Bones,
To thee my cries,
To thee my groans,
To thee my ſighs, my Tears aſcend:
No end?

My Throat, my Soul is hoarſe;
My heart is wither'd like a ground
Which thou doſt curſe.
My thoughts turn round,
And make me giddy: Lord, I fall,
Yet call.

From thee all pity flows.
Mothers are kind, becauſe thou art,
And doſt diſpoſe
To them apart:
Their Infants them, and they ſuck thee
More free.

Bowels of pity, hear!
Lord of my Soul, love of my mind,
Bow down thine ear!
Let not the wind
Scatter my words, and in the ſame
Thy Name!

Look

Look on my ſorrows round!
Mark well my Furnace! O what flames,
What heats abound!
What griefs, what ſhames!
Conſider Lord; Lord, bow thine ear,
And hear!

Lord Jeſu, thou didſt bow
Thy dying head upon the Tree:
O be not now
More dead to me!
Lord hear! *Shall he that made the ear,*
Not hear?

Behold, thy duſt doth ſtir;
It moves, it creeps, it aims at thee:
Wilt thou deferr
To ſuccour me,
Thy pile of duſt, wherein each crumb
Says, Come?

To thee help appertains.
Haſt thou left all things to their courſe,
And laid the reins
Upon the horſe?
Is all lockt? hath a ſinners plea
No key?

Indeed the World's thy book,
Where all things have their leaf aſſign'd:
Yet a meek look
Hath interlin'd.
Thy board is full, yet humble gueſts
Find neſts.

Thou

Thou tarriest, while I die,
And fall to nothing: thou doſt reign,
And rule on high,
While I remain
In bitter grief; yet I am ſtill
Thy child.

Lord, didſt thou leave thy throne,
Not to relieve? how can it be,
That thou art grown
Thus hard to me?
Were ſin alive, good cauſe there were
To bear.

But now both ſin is dead,
And all thy promiſes live and bide:
That wants his head;
Theſe ſpeak and chide,
And in thy boſome pour my tears,
As theirs.

Lord JESU, heal my heart,
Which hath been broken now ſo long,
That ev'ry part
Hath got a tongue!
Thy beggers grow; rid them away
To day.

My love, my ſweetneſs, hear!
By theſe thy feet, at which my heart
Lies all the year,
Pluck out thy dart,
And heal my troubled breſt, which cries,
Which dyes.